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WHAT STANDARDS FOR BROADCASTING?

Sir William Haley

It is the purpose of this paper to suggest that the fundamental problem of broadcasting within a democracy is to reconcile freedom with standards. It will be necessary to examine the nature of freedom and the nature of broadcasting and to define what is meant by standards. The problem has moreover to be studied not only in the obvious field of politics and religion but also in those of information, aesthetics, and entertainment. For while stress has been laid increasingly during the past twenty-five years on the power of broadcasting to communicate to all classes and conditions of people and to all nations, not enough attention has been paid to both the strength and the weakness that reside in the fact that what broadcasting has the power to communicate may be drawn from so many different realms of expression and such varied fields of activity.

That these problems should be examined only in relation to broadcasting within democracies may seem an arbitrary limitation. In fact, it is not. Where broadcasting is carried on under governments other than democracies these problems do not exist. To an absolute monarch, a dictator, an oligarchy, or a witch doctor, the microphone presents no dilemmas. At least, no ethical or moral ones. The particular responsibilities of broadcasting may be seen in this fact. It implies that the first duty of broadcasting among free peoples is itself to be free.

The ease with which this can be said is disarming. The difficulties begin when we seek to rationalize the statement, to define, and to be precise.

To examine the nature of freedom needs not a paper but volumes. Those volumes are constantly being rewritten. But so far as broadcasting is concerned it is hardly necessary to go beyond the great Mill-Stephen-Morley-Harrison quadrilateral joust of some eighty

years ago. The battle was curiously slow in developing. John Stuart Mill published his great essay, *On Liberty,* in 1859. It was not until 1873 that Sir Fitzjames Stephen, on his way home from India, wrote his massive denial. Mill died, unfortunately, before he had opportunity to reply. But both John Morley and Frederic Harrison came immediately and vigorously to his defence. Stephen dealt with them in the long Preface to a second edition of his *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* in 1874. Those in charge of broadcasting can never sufficiently ponder that noble "battle of the books" (for both main contestants were noble) with its attendant forays in the "Fortnightly." For though free men everywhere give all their lip-service to Mill, it still remains for the actions of many of them and for events to ensure that Stephen does not, in fact, win the battle. (Or, rather, lose it also. For by many modern standards the author of *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* was also liberally minded. Stephen would have been horrified no less than Mill at what is happening to liberty throughout great areas of the world today.)

Events may have shown the debate to be as yet unresolved in action. They confirm that it got to the heart of its many problems. And so far as the kind of broadcasting we are contemplating is concerned, there is predominantly one problem.

Broadcasting's difficulty when embracing freedom is that of all her other votaries. No matter how completely or comprehensively we hope to possess her, our hold of freedom can never be absolute. Indeed, it is instructive to consider how even freedom's greatest champions have had their reservations. As John Morley pointed out:

> Milton drew the line of liberty at what he calls 'neighboring differences, or rather indifferences.' . . . Roger Williams, the Welsh founder of Rhode Island, preached, as early as 1631, the principles of an unlimited toleration, extending to Catholics, Jews, and even infidels. Milton stopped a long way short of this. He did not mean "tolerated popery and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all religious and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate. . . ."
>
> Locke, writing five and forty years later, somewhat widened these limitations. His question was not merely whether there should be free expression of opinion, but whether there should furthermore be freedom of worship and of religious union. He answered both questions affirmatively. . . . But Locke fixed limits to toleration. No opinions contrary to human society, or to those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society, are to be tolerated by the magistrate. . . . [And] those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God.

Even those who are readiest to quote Mill's essay, *On Liberty,* do not always remember that in his introductory chapter he expressly exempted from his doctrine not only children, young persons, and those who must be protected against their own actions, but also "those

backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its nonage." That reservation, speciously adapted, has been the excuse of more than one of the dictators of the slave states of today.

Only those who are themselves in their nonage would consider that these things detract from the sincerity of Milton, Locke, or Mill. The truth is that there is always some point at which the climate of even the most civilized opinion in each generation considers that liberty degenerates into license. Both the hope and the despair of mankind lie in the fact that it is never a fixed point. The struggle of the ages sees it pushed now forward, now back. Broadcasting in democracies, being in the last analysis publicly controlled—in the United States by the fact that the entire revenue depends upon the sponsors; in Great Britain by more complex processes—can never be far ahead of the foremost battle line. What we have to consider next is the nature of the forces operating against its taking its rightful place in the van.

The first force is that already stated. In every age liberty is a relative thing. There is therefore the need to make a just equation between the proper climate of public opinion which keeps liberty the right side of what is considered as license and the natural reaction of the great majority of men and women that seeks to stifle the new and the, at first, uncomfortable, whether it be in politics, religion, culture, or art. This reaction can masquerade as climate of opinion, lazily refusing to examine the newcomer, and using the great power of public opinion to enforce its tenets. In such circumstances it has to be resisted.

The second force where broadcasting is concerned lies in the fact that intolerance is not the prerogative of certain Governments. It can be displayed by sponsors, by mass opinion acting through other channels, by established institutions, or by powerful minorities—and from any of these sources can be made to masquerade as the public interest.

The third force is the modern complication that sincere friends of liberty are convinced she has to be protected against herself. We have to face up to the fact that there are powerful forces in the world today misusing the privileges of liberty in order to destroy her. The question must be asked, however, whether suppression of information or opinion is the true defense. We may have come a long way from Mill's famous dictum that:

> If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind,

but Mill's reminders from history as to what has happened when suppression was most virulently exercised ought to warn us that no debate is ever permanently won by shutting one's ears or by even the most Draconian policy of silencing opponents. The *debate* must be won. And it must be won with full information. Where there are lies, they must be shown for what they are. Where there are errors, they must be refuted. It would be a major defeat if the enemies of democracy forced us to abandon our faith in the power of informed discussion and so brought us down to their own level. Mankind is so constituted, moreover, that if, where expression and discussion are concerned, the enemies of liberty are met with a denial of liberty, many men of goodwill will come to suspect there is something in the proscribed doctrine after all. Erroneous doctrines thrive on being expunged. They die if exposed.

We may leave on one side the fact that if we seek to contraband all error we may "hinder and retard the importation of our richest merchandize, Truth." In this particular case we are under no difficulty in making the distinction. But suppression of information or opinion is a cancerous growth.

It is worth pausing to ask why belief in the power of truth is so much weaker than it was. As Professor Willey has pointed out, *magna est veritas et praevalebit* is no longer the touchstone it was in the eighteenth century. It is not even what is was fifty to a hundred years later in Buckle's day. Is it because the modern instruments for the dissemination of opinion and information are so much more powerful than those of old? That error as well as truth may be monstrously amplified? (The call in that case is for a sense of responsibility in handling these instruments, for vigilance in preserving a sense of proportion, for the letting pass of no opportunity to distinguish the false from the true.) Or is it because error is ready to use the kind of power that truth must deny itself? "Who ever saw an instance," Godwin asked in his *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice,* "in which error unaided by power was victorious over truth?" Whatever may be the transient casualties, the long swing of history reassuringly answers the question. The way to remove the evil power is not to withhold from error its conflict with truth. So far as broadcasting is concerned such a course only leads to freedom being more easily killed when its enemies decide their infiltration has gone far enough for them to strike.

Freedom in broadcasting must be maintained to the uttermost limits within the climate of public opinion. Broadcasters should be vigilant and vigorous in resisting any attempts at encroachment upon

that freedom from without. They must be equally vigilant and vigorous at resisting encroachments from within.

We have asked whether it is the nature of broadcasting which has made so many people seemingly doubtful about the continuing power of truth. The nature of broadcasting is but imperfectly understood. One paradox has been stated in that the diversity of the material it can communicate is both its weakness and its strength. This will be dealt with later. But it is important to state at this point that broadcasting is compounded of many other contradictions.

There is the paradox that while broadcasting is one of the most powerful and pervasive of mediums it is also one of the most restricted. A speaker can tell millions in one broadcast about some single aspect of a subject. It is only rarely, as in the case of the B.B.C.'s Reith Lectures, that serious interest can be so engaged and sustained over an appreciable number of separate broadcasts as to ensure that the same listeners are given anything amounting in total to the contents of an ordinary-sized book.

Again, while a broadcast may have far wider coverage than any book, newspaper, or magazine, it suffers a most grievous restriction where influence is concerned. It can travel widely in space. It is held to one point in time. It is true that literary historians are fond of telling us about authors whose books have become famous overnight. Taken literally, this is in every case a piece of licensed hyperbole. Books make their effect gradually. Very often the more slowly they do so the more lasting the result. Sometimes that effect may be delayed for a decade or for a generation. It does not matter. So long as the Miltons are not mute they run little risk of remaining inglorious. Sooner or later, discernment, fashion, taste, truth (what power you will) will discover their ancient print and use some more to make the discovery known.

It is not so with broadcasting. If a broadcast does not become famous overnight then *as a broadcast* it is done. Even if it does become famous overnight its effect, if not its fame, is likely to be ephemeral. Broadcasting has to depend on the printed word not only for much of its substance. Unless a broadcast can get into print, it is not likely to endure. Indeed the ultimate paradox of broadcasting may well be that its greatest service to the propagation of ideas will reside in the fact that the publicity given by broadcasting ensures large sales for books whose contents were originally commissioned as broadcasts.

It is important also to be clear about the true effects of broadcast-

ing. Single books have changed the lives of many people throughout the ages. It would be hard to name a single broadcast that has had the same effect. Broadcasting depends for its influence on its cumulative use. And even in this regard, though the dictators and the national leaders in democracies have shown what power can be wielded through the microphone, this power has almost invariably been emotional. It is impossible to think of a broadcaster who has had the influence of a Hamilton, a Bentham, a Carlyle, a William James, or a Shaw in the field of ideas.

Finally there is the fact that while broadcasters like to talk and write about their art, they really mean their technique. For broadcasting is not an art; it is a means of communication. As such, in all the diversity of interests it serves, it has no one message to give. Whether it be in politics or religion or culture, it has a duty to see all are spoken. For despite all the limitations I have mentioned, it remains a most pervasive and powerful social instrument.

We have seen that freedom in broadcasting demands that it shall be available to all to the furthest extent possible within the climate of public opinion. We have also seen that broadcasting, by its very nature, has an infinity of responsibilities. We now come to the central problem: broadcasting is a finite medium.

Millions of books upon thousands of subjects can go on their missionary or mercenary quests across any country and no one work need exclude or get in the way of the other. But the amount of broadcasting time in any country, whether it be on an individual station or on a national network, is bound to be limited. Selection must therefore be constantly taking place. All the different qualities of material in all the different spheres of thought, religion, politics, culture, and entertainment, are warring for time on the air against each other. In all these fields there are the true and the false; the good, the bad, and the indifferent; from the past, in the present, and of the future; all clamoring for attention. And the whole of history tells us that the one thing we can be certain of is that in trying to ascribe them to their appropriate categories we shall make some most ludicrous mistakes. Freedom demands of us, however, that we shall make them. The problem is not to escape making them but to ensure they are made. For diversity must be achieved.

The point is how. The most obvious way would appear to be a laissez-faire system, a free-for-all at the microphone with no one holding the ring. But there is a Gresham's Law in broadcasting as well as in currency. So long as general free education remains in its

present early stages, that is for at least another generation, the good in almost every sphere is in danger of being driven out by the bad. The degree to which this is likely to happen may vary slightly from country to country. But there is no country which is not conscious of the process. Even in the United States, which is the extreme exponent of laissez-faire in broadcasting, there is a government body endowed with powers to ensure that public service broadcasting shall not entirely disappear. The Charter of the B.B.C. enjoins it to be a means of information and education, as well as of entertainment, and to this the B.B.C. has itself added the unwritten requirement that it should seek to be a means of raising public taste.

The problem is seen in its most elementary form in the field of broadcasting entertainment. A curious phenomenon about listeners' habits is their apparent insatiability for whatever they happen at any moment to like. A radio run entirely by mass vote would see comedy show following comedy show in one country and soap opera following soap opera in another. A year ago, when the British Broadcasting Corporation was broadcasting on its national networks over six hundred plays a year, the commonest plea among its listeners was that the B.B.C. should do more plays, and one of the most general demands in broadcasting is for stations which will endlessly play the same kind of music.

In some ways, this apparent insatiability of listeners is another result of broadcasting's restrictions in time. What the pleas to the B.B.C. meant was that there were listeners who missed plays because they did not happen to be free to listen when the plays were broadcast, and wanted them broadcast at other times. One can go to see a stage play or a film whenever one wishes during its run. One can pick up a book at any time through a number of years. If one misses a broadcast it is lost.

It should be emphasized that this crowding of the air with more and more of the same thing need not be confined to sponsored broadcasting. It is a danger facing any absolute laissez-faire system. The weight of money in sponsoring is only one incentive to laissez-faire. There are others. It is even argued that it is democratic to give way completely to this mass appetite.

The short answer generally given to this problem is that broadcasting must have a regard for minorities. But minorities are by their nature often more intolerant than majorities. Each minority tends to think only of itself. It does not mind what happens to any other minority in any other field, still less in its own. It tends to spend much of its time (this is true of culture and religion as well as of

politics) fighting other minorities with even greater zest than it fights the majority. Freedom on the air would never be safe if left merely to the warring sects and septs.

Diversity in broadcasting cannot therefore be left to the weight of the minorities any more than it can be left to the weight of the masses. It can only be left to those in charge of broadcasting. For if broadcasting is to retain its proper diversity there must, whether the system be sponsored or unsponsored, be some conscious method of control. It can be self-control. It should be self-control. All controls outside themselves should be resisted by those in charge of broadcasting. But the control they exercise must not only achieve diversity by means of freedom, it must preserve standards.

The definitions of standards is perhaps the most difficult of all the tasks those in charge of broadcasting can be asked to undertake. It is also the most necessary. Broadcasting standards are varied and imponderable. There are no absolutes. They have to be applied in every field broadcasting serves. There must be standards in vaudeville as well as in ethical or religious broadcasting, in balancing the whole range of music, in news, in educational broadcasting, in broadcasting on public affairs. And these standards have to be established despite the fact that even within the smallest community there will be no unanimous opinion as to what is proper.

The use that is being made of the word standards in this paper excludes any reference to the technical or professional quality of broadcasts. It is always desirable to achieve the greatest possible effectiveness in every broadcast. But it can in fact be achieved without regard to standards. The most brilliant broadcast technically or professionally may have the most deplorable standards.

Standards are of two kinds. There are first the standards to be applied in each particular department of broadcasting. To take perhaps the simplest instance: how low shall be the comedy which is allowed on the air? Or consider news bulletins: in broadcast news, a balance must be struck between what is important and generally uninteresting and what is exciting but trivial. This is a very real problem when it is realized that even a fifteen minute bulletin has not as many words as two columns in a newspaper, and experience has shown that the average mind cannot retain information from a bulletin which lasts longer. Every new bulletin must therefor be compiled according to some scale of values.

What degree of crankiness of ideas or apparent silliness is to be given to the microphone? And to what extent? This is more difficult.

Even the most confident and dogmatic orthodoxy over the seemingly most finally decided matters must always hear the faint, disturbing echo of *epur si muove* to raise the ghost of a question mark. In religion there are the great established churches, the more modern variants, the blatant exploiters of uneducated, primitive emotions, and the single prophets. Here too it has to be remembered that the greatest religions in the world have sprung from individuals, some of whom were sincerely thought to be such enemies of society in their own day that they were most responsibly put to death.

When we turn to culture, music, or aesthetics, the consequences to national life and happiness may be almost equally powerful. A people not brought up to seek and to distinguish goodness, beauty, truth, will be poor indeed whatever other riches they may have. Here values are never constant. It is not only the new that has to be appraised; but the old must also be constantly re-assessed. It may seem unbelievable that an age will ever come that will not listen to Beethoven. It is worth remembering that although Bach's genius was generally acknowledged in his lifetime, his work suffered an almost total eclipse from his death in 1750 until Mendelssohn revived it in 1829. The Greeks had to be rediscovered at the Renaissance. There are great movements, as apart from fashions, in aesthetics. Broadcasting, while satisfying the needs of its time at any particular moment must at all times hold to the enduring values, not deserting the gold of yesterday for the chromium-plate of today; not letting the "masterpieces" oust the classics; and at the same time not falling into the opposite error of refusing a hearing to the new because it is so different from the old.

Standards in this sense, therefore, are a matter of taste and range. The range must be as wide as possible. The taste must be sure because it is based on principles and not on prejudice.

The second kind of standards are those applied to broadcasting as a whole. Assuming that the standards in all the different spheres that broadcasting can serve are right, there remains the question of the proportion to be maintained between the times allotted to all those various spheres. The narrow range of mass taste mentioned above operates against this second category of standards more powerfully than against the first. There are those, of course, who say that broadcasting need have no educational mission and no social purpose. If that is agreed, it is true the problem is reduced to a minimum, though minorities would still be entitled to their due. But looking at the world today and realizing that the one hope of mankind is that one day it shall become adult, civilized, and educated; that in fact the survival of democracy depends on this; appreciating the valuable,

cumulative educational instrument broadcasting has in its power to be (even if only by being the greatest signpost to other quicker and surer means of education); can this responsibility possibly be let go by default? The duty of leadership in raising taste and inculcating a regard for values should be so apparent as to allow only one answer.

Viewed from this aspect the standards of any broadcasting system may be broadly judged by the seriousness of its output as a whole. No one would want broadcasting to be confined completely to serious programs. The wisest men are the better for relaxation or laughter. The less wise even more so. There is in any case little danger of that happening. But there is a real danger that broadcasting may end up with completely trivial programs. There are critics who hold that in some places this has already happened.

Given the diversity of broadcasting's material, remembering the need for the greatest possible freedom at the microphone, having regard to the Gresham's Law that operates in culture, entertainment, and information owing to the present broad base of the social and educational pyramid in almost every modern community, how are standards nevertheless to be ensured?

There are some, of course, who say that all that is required is perfect freedom and that standards can look after themselves. The hollowness of this can be demonstrated in various ways. First, to take an extreme case, it is considered everywhere necessary to have laws to exclude blasphemy, obscenity, and so on. Secondly, the weight of public opinion does not stop the kind of newspapers that generally have the largest circulations from having them. And when the microphone has been used to build up a number of people into unofficial public oracles, those who have come to the top in popularity have not always been notable for their judgment, wisdom, or taste.

The matter is much more complex. It is the need to allow the microphone to every proper form of expression, no matter how outlandish, or new, or novel, or trite, or banal, or outmoded, or silly it may appear to be, and without injuring freedom to see that the spurious does not drive out the true, that the humbug does not supersede the genuine, that the result of the greatest possible free-for-all is not a still greater lowering of values.

That it can be done there is no doubt. But it will only be done if it is a conscious process. This means that there must be a maximum of freedom, but a conscious curbing of laissez-faire. There must be a more explicit recognition of the true function of broadcasting. And in the light of that recognition it must be staffed with the kind of people who will make its service their career and will forward its

purposes. Broadcasting, despite all its diversity, must be regarded primarily as an educational medium, with a cumulative effect and a progressive aim. There must be recruited to it the highest caliber of men and women in all walks of life that can possibly be attracted. They must be kept fresh, eager, questing, animated both by a faith in the things that matter and a spirit of intellectual doubt that is constantly seeking to determine what those things will prove to be. Through everything they must be prepared to hold fast to the ancient moral values. These are well established. They derive from Greece, Rome, and the Holy Land. They are the basis of our civilization whether we apply them or not. Those in charge of broadcasting must use them as reagents on everything claiming admission to the microphone, denying to none the right to pass the test.

They must be prepared to make mistakes and to profit by their mistakes. For much that has been said earlier about the weakness of broadcasting is also one of its greatest assets where experiment is concerned. If no overwhelming abiding good can be done by a single broadcast, it is true also that the single broadcast, however bad, can do little abiding harm. As a matter of fact, far too much fuss is made in almost every country about the occasional bad broadcast. It is not in the individual bad broadcast that the danger to standards lies. It is in the trend of broadcasting as a whole. Any single bad broadcast should be judged mainly in the light of how it affects that trend. But it is the trend as a whole that should be ceaselessly, rigorously, unsparingly examined.

In news, in talks, in music, in drama, in entertainment, in religion, in public affairs, in all the ways in which broadcasting can communicate information and the raw material for the listener's individual judgment, is the trend of broadcasting going the right way? What does the year by year record show? That is the question those in charge of broadcasting and those among the listeners who care for civilization have to ask and answer.

Mention was made earlier of the encroachments on broadcasting's freedom which may come from within itself. One of the most dangerous and most insidious of these is broadcasting's increasing subservience to time. The clock has become a tyrant. Hour broadcasts have been cut to half-hours, even half-hours are sometimes outnumbered by those of fifteen minutes. The demands of the material are denied; the crudest and cruellest injury is done to works of art; trimming, expurgation, cutting, gutting go to limits that offend all sense and taste.

The overriding reason is, of course, the fear that the listener may switch off. He or she *must* be kept at the loudspeaker. Therefore, quick and constant changes are everything. All other considerations must be subordinated to the need for maintaining attention. The truth is that it is not attention that is thus maintained. It is a half-ear background listening that may pick up a sponsor's message, a comedian's jokes, or an audience's applause, but will retain little of more serious purpose.

It was largely with the object of overcoming this rule of the studio clock that the B.B.C. Third Program was introduced. It has been called a highbrow program, an esoteric program, a minority program. It may be any of these things. But they are not automatic requirements. They are not fundamental to its purpose. What is fundamental is that those who control it are charged to regard their first duty as being to whatever material they decide to broadcast. It must have the requirements in time its creator deemed necessary for its purpose. If a work is part of a larger conception, then it can embrace the rest of that conception also, whether in the course of one evening or on succeeding nights. So that the Third Program shall be free to achieve these ends it is perhaps unique among the world's radio services in that it has no regular or recurring commitments, and not a single fixed point.

The Third Program has from the first been specifically addressed to the serious, attentive listener. If as a result of this it has by a natural process tended to strive to concentrate on the higher things, so much the better. Other broadcasting organizations will doubtless find other ways of meeting the problem. But broadcasting will not reach its final stature until it and its listeners have overthrown the intolerance of time.

Freedom, diversity, standards, purpose, time. These may seem a strange assortment of requirements to make of broadcasting. Its needs are generally expressed in other terms. But its duty, however expressed, should come in essence to one thing. Broadcasting should play its part in bringing about the reign of truth. Truth is here used in the widest sense.

Truth may be said to be ever and never in danger. If men and women fear more for truth today than ever before, is it not because they have now come to recognize more than ever that in the sum of all its aspects it is the life force of their whole ethic and civilization? In a world beset by disintegrating forces, truth is bearing the brunt

of the attack. If it fails, all the other values free men hold dear must perish.

The centuries reassure us. Truth has been submerged over large areas of the civilized world, sometimes for ages. But truth has never been extinguished. It has always reasserted itself. And despite all the shortcomings of modern education, it is safe to say there are today more men and women in the world aware of the need endlessly to search for truth than ever there were before. There is something in the spirit of man that has insured that neither barbarism nor bigotry can permanently prevail.

> For many a faggot of well-seasoned wood
> Has been consumed in the absurd attempt
> To burn the living principle of Truth.

That was written long ago by a very bad poet. But he saw the gleam. As reward let him be linked, for probably the first and last time, with a very good poet:

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

To many that may seem today to have all the lost, far-off innocence of some halcyon age, a dead gem from the Greek anthology. But for all those in any way responsible for the conduct of broadcasting it should be the living law. They should hold fast to it, work under it, test all their conduct by it and know no other master. For if only we will give undivided allegiance to the true and the beautiful, the third partner, the good, will eventually come into its own.

CHURCH AND STATE IN AMERICA

Anthony T. Bouscaren

"RELIGION, MORALITY, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." These words are taken from the famous Northwest Ordinance, which was enacted in 1787 by the last Congress under the Articles of Confederation. They contain the first provision made in America for a public school system. Two years later, many of the same men, representing the same people, sitting as the first Congress under the new Constitution, proposed the following amendment to that Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; . . ." Do these words represent a fundamental change in attitude on the part of the American people on the question of what relation should subsist between public education and religion? On the face of it the answer is "no"; that a contrary answer should be made, however, is the implication of the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of McCollum v. Board of Education, decided on March 8, 1948.

Several years ago, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant groups in Champaign, Illinois, formed a Council on Religious Education. The parents making up the Council concluded an agreement with the local board of education by which religious instruction classes in their respective faiths would be made available to students at the South Side Public School. This community project of co-operation between education and religion, on a basis of equality, was but one of seven thousand such projects in operation in the United States, embracing a total of ten million public school children in forty-six states. Enthusiastically received by parents and children alike, these released-time programs were gradually becoming standard practice in many communities.

It so happened, however, that there lived in Champaign Mrs. Vashti McCollum, wife of a University of Illinois professor, whose

son, Terry, was in the fourth grade of the South Side Public School. Mrs. McCollum was the daughter of a self-styled "free thinker," and she raised Terry to be of the same persuasion. Terry, at age eleven, is on record as declaring: "I make no secret among my friends and acquaintances that I am an atheist." When Terry reported to his mother about the released-time classes at his school, Mrs. McCollum objected to the teaching of religion on public school premises with the co-operation of the public school authorities. After all, was not this a threat to democracy and the Constitution? Did not this violate that "great American principle" of the separation of church and state? Like many others, Mrs. McCollum had the notion that the First Amendment to the Constitution meant that no aid or comfort to religion could be given by the public authority, in any way, shape, or form. Determined to put an end to this invasion of the American public school by the forces of organized religion, she took the matter to the courts. Turned down by the Illinois Supreme Court, which could see no establishment of religion or breach of religious freedom in the released-time program, she ultimately achieved her goal through an appeal to the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Justice Black, speaking for the majority, held that the Champaign Plan "falls squarely under the ban of the First Amendment as we interpreted it in Everson v. Board of Education." The reasons given were: "the use of tax supported property for religious instruction" and "the close co-operation between the school authorities and the religious council in promoting religious instruction." As a result of the decision, the parents and children of Champaign had to stop their program, and similar programs throughout the nation were placed in jeopardy. Public education authorities in colleges as well as secondary schools were further alarmed by Justice Jackson's suggestion that the decision might bring an end to courses on religion and religious history, or even to courses in art, philosophy, and literature, which can hardly be taught without reference to religion. In the words of Justice Black, no tax aid however minute or indirect can be given

to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor a federal government can participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups, and vice versa. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion was intended to erect "a wall of separation between church and state."

We now begin to see the heart of the problem: what is the constitutional-historical meaning of the "establishment of religion" clause in the Constitution, and what has the term "separation of

church and state" to do with the Constitution, if anything? Does the Constitution require all public-supported education to be kept strictly secular? Does it bar all co-operation between the state and religion? In Everson v. Board of Education, better known as the New Jersey bus case, which was decided thirteen months prior to the McCollum case, the answer, in its immediate and practical application at least was in the negative. A New Jersey law authorized boards of education to provide for transportation of children to and from remote schools, and ordered that if such transportation be provided for public school children, it should also be provided for children attending private, non-profit schools. Challenged by a taxpayer named Everson, as a violation of the First Amendment, the law was upheld by the Supreme Court. Here the pertinent section of Justice Black's majority opinion reads as follows:

> . . . we cannot say that the First Amendment prohibits New Jersey from spending tax-raised funds to pay the bus fares of parochial school pupils as part of a general program under which it pays the fares of pupils attending public and other schools.

A similar doctrine had been enunciated in the Louisiana textbook case, when the Court held that children attending parochial schools could be made beneficiaries of that state's free textbook law without harm to the Constitution. According to the Court, the purpose of the statute "is education broadly, its method comprehensive. Individual interests are aided only as the common interest is safeguarded." Presumably federal appropriations in support of free school lunches embrace parochial schools on the same basis.

Returning to the McCollum case: Justice Reed's lone, yet powerful dissent held that the co-operative released-time arrangement at Champaign involved neither an "establishment of religion" nor "aid" to religion by the state sufficient to justify the Supreme Court in interfering with local legislation and local customs. Mr. Reed assumed that those clauses of the First Amendment having to do with religion retain their historical meaning: there shall be no establishment by law, and there shall be free exercise of religion. On this basis, he found the majority opinion to be "erroneous." In fact, he confessed that "it is difficult to extract from the opinions any conclusion as to what it is in the Champaign Plan that is unconstitutional." We may sympathize with Justice Reed in his quandary, for what has happened is this: the Court majority in the McCollum case based its opinion on a shibboleth known as "separation of church and state" which, in addition to having no concrete meaning within American

tradition, is nowhere to be found in the Constitution. The Court in effect substituted this notion of "separation" for the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

The central issue then is this: either the Champaign Plan violated the establishment of religion clause of the First Amendment on the questionable ground that that clause forbids any connection at all between government and religion, or it violated the freedom of religion clause. As to the latter, it is difficult to see how Terry McCollum's freedom of religion was violated, because the local school board was perfectly willing to assign space to Terry, his parent, and any others who might desire to confer together during the hour of released time with regard to the general problems of atheism. The decision must then have been based on the establishment clause.

The Court's new interpretation of the "law respecting an establishment of religion" is that of Justices Rutledge and Black, first found in the Everson case and then repeated in the McCollum decision. According to this interpretation, the First Amendment, made applicable to the states by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, forbids both federal and state governments to "pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another." Ignoring the ambiguous first clause, historical data supports the last clause but not the middle clause. It is the middle clause, the ban against any aid, however indirect, to religion in whatever form, that contradicts the essence of American tradition, American history, and American constitutional development. What the establishment of religion provision of the First Amendment does, and all that it does, is to rule out any preference or discrimination which is based on religious grounds. In his dissent, Justice Reed lists examples of accepted practices that might be considered aid to religion if the majority opinion were to be rigorously applied: tax exemptions for religious groups; the free bus transportation, textbooks, and school lunches for parochial school children previously sanctioned by the Court; and denominational training for the ministry provided under the so-called GI Bill of Rights. He inquires (rhetorically?) whether the majority means to censure Congress with its chaplain, and West Point and Annapolis with their religious services for cadets—to say nothing of every community in the nation that allows religious organizations equal access to "the incidental advantages that [they] . . . obtain as a by-product of organized society."

What Justice Reed wished to emphasize, however, was that there does not exist (and never has existed) any principle however high-sounding, which forbids federal or state funds from going to religious

institutions which are performing a public service, notably the public service of training young men and women for citizenship. All such indirect aid to religion, especially through schools, cannot fairly be termed an establishment of religion, in the true sense of that phrase, which means merely setting up by law one religion as the American religion, to the detriment of all others. Pertinent here is a quotation from a Mississippi Supreme Court decision (Chance v. Mississippi, 190 Miss. 453):

> The religion to which children of school age adhere is not subject to control by the state; but the children themselves are subject to its control. If the pupil may fulfill its duty to the state by attending a parochial school, it is difficult to see why the state may not fulfill its duty by encouraging it 'by all suitable means.' The state is under the duty to ignore the child's creed, but not its need. . . . The state which allows the pupil to subscribe to any religious creed should not, because of his exercise of this right, proscribe him from benefits common to all.

The same decision elsewhere declares: "There is no requirement that the church should be a liability to those of its citizenship who are at the same time citizens of the state." The logical impact of the McCollum decision is to make second-class citizens of parochial school children, for it would cut off from them any and all public welfare benefits to which their parents subscribe in the form of taxation. This would affect over two-and-one-half million children in 10,225 elementary and secondary schools. The objection may be made: why do not Catholic parents send their children to public schools? The answer to this is as follows: Ever since the famous Oregon decision in 1925, by which a state law compelling all children to attend public schools was declared unconstitutional, it has been clear to all that the public school system has no monopoly in education such as characterizes the monolithic educational systems of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Parents sending their children to parochial schools discharge a civic obligation, that of observing the compulsory education laws. These schools, let it be remembered, must measure up to state standards and contain the same general curriculum as public schools and, in addition, teach courses in religion. And yet the McCollum decision would penalize parents who decide to send their children to parochial schools, as indeed it would jeopardize all friendly co-operation between religion and government. Lest there be any question of the severity and rigidity of the new interpretation of the First Amendment as handed down by the Supreme Court, here is the pertinent portion of Justice Rutledge's dissent in the Everson decision, which has become the majority view in the McCollum decision: "The Amendment's purpose," says Rutledge, ". . . was to create a com-

plete and permanent separation of the spheres of religious activity and civil authority by comprehensively forbidding every form of public aid or support for religion."

In the opinion of one of America's foremost authorities on the Constitution, Professor Edward S. Corwin, Justice Rutledge "sold his brethren a bill of goods." The novel doctrine that the establishment clause of the First Amendment prevents any aid to religion, and co-operation between religion and government—that the First Amendment sets up a "wall of separation between church and state"—is a doctrine which goes contrary to American history, constitutional law, and the whole American tradition. The question therefore arises: where did Justices Rutledge and Black discover this highly salable bill of goods? Did Rutledge, and then Black, who interpreted the establishment clause to mean a "wall of separation," apply the Supreme Court's own formula for interpreting a constitutional amendment? The Court, in a case decided in 1899, whose language was repeated in 1934, stated the following: "The safe way is to read the amendment's language in connection with the then known condition of affairs out of which the occasion for its adoption may have arisen, and then to construe it, if there be therein any doubtful expressions, in a way . . . to forward the known purpose or object for which the amendment was adopted." Justices Rutledge and Black distinguish themselves by disregarding this time-honored formula while attempting to find an interpretation of the First Amendment. They claim to find their new interpretation in the writings of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. Let us now examine the validity of their interpretation.

Justice Rutledge leans heavily on the *Memorial and Remonstrance* of James Madison, which Madison introduced into the Virginia legislature in 1785, four years before the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution was framed. This statement of his views was directed against a proposal then pending in the Virginia Assembly to levy a tax for the benefit of teachers of the Christian religion (a bill having the strong support of Patrick Henry, George Washington, and John Marshall; and it would have virtually established the Anglican Church in the state. The *Remonstrance* is often given chief credit for the defeat of the bill, and it is this same *Remonstrance,* issued in this state political battle, which has been used as an authentic interpretation of the First Amendment, introduced some four years later by Madison in the first Congress under the Constitution. But the issue opposed by the *Remonstrance* is certainly not that which faced the Court in the McCollum case. Here the issue is not the estab-

lishment by the state of one religion at the expense of other religions but rather the toleration and encouragement (not involving tangible aid) by the state of religion in general, on a basis of equality. Indeed in the *Remonstrance* (sec. 4), Madison makes much of the idea of equality and says: "As the Bill violates equality by subjecting some to peculiar burdens; so it violates the same principle, by granting to others peculiar exemptions." In section 8 he continues: "A just government, instituted to secure & perpetuate it [the public liberty] . . . will be best supported by protecting every citizen in the enjoyment of his Religion with the same equal hand which protects his person and his property; by neither invading the equal rights of any Sect, nor suffering any Sect to invade those of another." Such sentiments would seem to offer little support to Justice Rutledge; rather do they seem to line up Madison behind Justice Reed and the Champaign Board of Education.

When Madison later took the lead in framing the First Amendment, what did he intend by it? His first draft read as follows:

> The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall any religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, or on any pretext infringed.

These words he later interpreted to mean that

> Congress shall not establish a religion, and enforce the legal observation of it by law, nor compel men to worship God in any manner contrary to his conscience. . . . If the word *national* was inserted before religion, it would satisfy the minds of the honorable gentlemen.

Madison believed that "the people feared one sect might obtain preeminence, or two might combine together, and establish a religion to which they would compel others to conform."

At the time that Madison spoke, various religions were established in five different states, and the whole American experience up to that time was characterized by close co-operation between the individual states and religion. There was no tradition of separation of church and state in the sense of a ban on government aid to religion; in fact the situation was quite the contrary. With this in mind, it is easy to see that the only possible solution for the new national Congress was to accept an amendment to the Constitution (once it was decided to have an amendment) which would favor no one church over another as far as the Federal Government was concerned. Political wisdom dictated that the amendment forbid the Federal Government from establishing any church, that it treat all churches on a basis of

equality, and that it allow each state to establish a church or not, as it saw fit. That this is clear is shown by Virginia's own amendment plan as presented by Madison: ". . . and no particular religious sect or society ought to be favored or established by law in preference to others." There was nothing in the language or spirit of the proposed amendments forbidding religion as such from being favored by the Federal Government; there was only a prohibition against one form of religion being favored over others. It was not a doctrine of separation of church and state that motivated those proposing the First Amendment; it was rather a compromise: if the people of a state could not have their Church established nationally, they were not going to allow any other to be established.

In evaluating the Everson and McCollum decisions, one must keep in mind that James Madison, in proposing his amendment on religious liberty in Congress in 1789, was concerned with something quite distinct from that which had concerned him in the state of Virginia in 1785. He evidently did not believe that he should bring Virginia's difficulties with the Church of England into the national arena. What Madison said in Virginia in the *Remonstrance* in 1785 had little or nothing to do with what the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution meant to him and his contemporaries. Far from implying any antagonism or rigid separation between religion and government, Madison's drafts of that amendment were concerned merely that no single church be established nationally. It was commonly agreed that religion was not to be subjected to those powers which the Federal Government was to possess, whatever the individual states might do. Madison, as the proponent of an amendment to the Federal Constitution and as a national statesman, spoke in a vein vastly different from the speeches and writings he produced in Virginia while seeking to prevent the re-establishment of a church he had come to dislike. Madison, in the Congressional debates on the First Amendment, when questioned as to the meaning of it, answered simply, "that Congress should not establish a religion and enforce the legal observance of it by law, nor compel men to worship God in any manner contrary to their conscience." As a legislator, Madison did not attempt to write into the Amendment any prohibition against equal government aid to all religions. Ignoring all this, Justices Rutledge and Black still look solely to the *Remonstrance* and to Virginia's Bill for Religious Liberty for their interpretation of the First Amendment. As they said in the Everson case: "This Court has previously recognized that the provisions of the First Amendment . . . had the same object and were intended to provide the same protection against

government intrusion on religious liberty as the Virginia Statute.' Yet the Virginia Statute (or Bill for Religious Liberty) was enacted on January 19, 1786, over one year before the Constitution was drafted, over two years before the ratification debate in the Virginia Convention, and over three years before the adoption of the First Amendment by Congress. Further, if Madison believed that the phrase "establishment of religion" meant more than merely the preference of one religion over another, and believed that the Virginia Statute was more inclusive in this respect, why did he not urge the wording of the Virginia Statute in place of the phraseology he suggested? His failure to do so negates the validity of any argument that he understood the phrase "establishment" to be broader in scope than the interpretation he first suggested in Congress by his phraseology "nor shall any national religion be established." At no time during the Congressional debates, lasting from June 8 to September 25, 1789, did Madison suggest or argue for any separation of government from religion or religious exercises. As debated in the Committee of the Whole by Madison, Sylvester, Gerry, Sherman, Vining, Huntington, and Livermore, never once was there raised the argument that establishment of religion meant anything more than a prohibition on Congress from establishing by law a religion for all the states and for all the people—a prohibition on the preferment of one religion over another. Indeed, Congress did not wish to express "any disinterest in religion or its welfare, but rather spoke eloquently of the anxiety of the Framers to protect it, foster it, and pre-eminently, to leave it a local rather than a national matter."

The argument of Justices Rutledge and Black, interpreting the First Amendment by means of Madison's *Remonstrance* and the Virginia Statute, is completely overturned by the attitude which Virginia itself took when the proposed First Amendment came up for ratification by its Senate. Recently discovered evidence[1] proves conclusively that the Virginia legislature did not think that the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution meant the forbidding of any support or aid to religion; not only that, but Virginia explicitly rejected the idea that her own Bill for Religious Liberty was the inspiration of the First Amendment.

And now to the other prop on which the anti-aid to religion proponents lean: Thomas Jefferson and the slogan "separation of church and state." Justice Rutledge declares as follows in his dissent in the Everson decision: "We have staked the very existence of our country

[1] *Daily Advertiser* (New York), Jan. 2, 1790 and Jan. 26, 1790.

on the faith that complete separation between the state and religion is best for the state and best for religion." In the McCollum decision, the term "wall of separation" is used, with special reference to Thomas Jefferson. The validity of this separation dogma has already been seen to be highly questionable in that the early American tradition, right through the period of Constitution and amendment-making, saw state churches established, as well as close co-operation between government and religion. The Northwest Ordinance, the Declaration of Independence, the attitude of the Founding Fathers, and the heavy Federalist majority framing the First Amendment all add up to co-operation between government and religion—not separation.

Some of those who base their argument on Jefferson either ignore or forget the fact that he was in Paris during the framing of the First Amendment. Furthermore, in a letter from Paris dated February 7, 1788, he pleaded for a Declaration of Rights to be annexed to the Constitution, including freedom of religion, but there is no reference to separation of state from religion, nor even to establishment. Another letter dated May 27 of the same year, which comments at length on the Constitution, gives no hint of any need for a ban on aid or encouragement to religion. Yet Jefferson is quoted for the statement that the purpose of the First Amendment was to build "a wall of separation between church and state." Eagerly seizing upon this highly nebulous phrase, the rigid separationists close their eyes to all else and conclude that Jefferson opposed any aid or encouragement of religion. What then precisely did Jefferson have in mind? So far as his much quoted phrase bears on the question of religion in the schools, it certainly does not support the position of the Supreme Court in the McCollum decision. Dealing with the subject in regard to his own recently established University of Virginia, Jefferson wrote:

> It was not however to be understood that instruction in religious opinion and duties was meant to be precluded by public authorities, as indifferent to the interests of society. On the contrary, the relations which exist between man and his Maker, and the duties resulting from these relations, are the most interesting and important to every human being, and the most incumbent on his study and investigation. The want of instruction in the various creeds of religious faith existing among our citizens presents, therefore, a chasm in a general institution of the useful sciences . . .

Both Madison and Jefferson, far from demanding that public-supported education be exclusively secular and admitting of no religious elements, held merely that the Federal Government should

give no preference to any single religion or denomination. That this was the contemporary interpretation is buttressed by the authoritative *Commentaries on the Constitution* of Joseph Story, who wrote:

> Probably at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, and of the amendment to it, now under consideration, the general, if not the universal sentiment in America was that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the state, so far as not incompatible with the private rights of conscience, and the freedom of religious worship. An attempt to level all religions, and make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference would have created universal disapprobation if not universal indignation.

Perhaps sensing the weakness of the reliance placed by his colleagues on Madison and Jefferson, Justice Frankfurter, in the McCollum case, rests his weight on the alleged influence of Horace Mann in driving religion out of the public schools in Massachusetts. Yet Raymond Culver, in his *Horace Mann and Religion in the Massachusetts Public Schools,* thinks otherwise:

> He [Mann] took a firm stand against the idea of a purely secular education, and on one occasion said he was in favor of religious instruction "to the extremest verge to which it can be carried without invading those rights of conscience which are established by the laws of God, and guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the State." At another time he said that he regarded hostility to religion in the schools as the greatest crime he could commit. Lest his name go down in history as that of one who had attempted to drive religious instruction from the schools, he devoted several pages in his final Report—the twelfth—to a statement in which he denied the charges of his enemies.

Returning to the legislative history of the First Amendment, the following conclusions seem undeniable: The Federal Government should adopt no religion as the official one of the United States, and it should respect the freedom of exercise of any religion. The states were left free to establish a religion or not as they saw fit. Nothing was said or implied in the legislative process to the effect that the religious amendment to the Constitution forbade the Federal Government from maintaining relations with various forms of religion, or even support of them, provided it acted with equality and impartiality. The so-called American principle of separation of church and state did not exist at the time of the adoption of the First Amendment, while the policy of co-operation of state with religion was universal. The Federal Government should respect equality among competing religious denominations, and it should also recognize the right of each individual to belong to the denomination of his choice.

Perhaps the weakest link in the McCollum decision is the majority view that the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment

(adopted in 1868) extends the establishment ban to the states. Although, since 1931, Court decisions have used the Fourteenth Amendment to extend the freedom of speech, assembly, and free exercise of religion clauses of the First Amendment to the states, no attempt was made before the Everson case in 1947 to include the establishment of religion clause within the same doctrine. Even in the Everson case the attempt does not form an essential part of the decision. In the McCollum case, Mrs. McCollum sought to make official the inclusion of the establishment of religion clause under the Fourteenth Amendment. The appellee, on the other hand, pointed out that the establishment of religion clause differs in kind from the other provisions of the First Amendment. This clause seeks merely to restrain the Federal Government from establishing a religion; it does not involve personal rights as such (as do the speech and assembly clauses), but rather divides the powers of the Federal and state governments. The courts have persistently refused to extend to the states provisions intended as restraints on federal power, when the intent was merely to divide powers.

Justice Black, in the Everson decision, attempted to list exactly what the establishment of religion clause forbids, with the intention of effectively outlawing religion as far as government encouragement was concerned. At the end of his list, Justice Black gives but one citation: Reynolds v. U.S. An examination of this case, however, reveals none of the items listed by Justice Black, and Black alleges no other precedents. There is in fact no other decision which extends the establishment of religion clause to the states; still less any which would forbid either the Federal Government or the state governments from utilizing tax-raised money for religious purposes by virtue of the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

Justice Black's unsupported case for rigid separation of church and state is further weakened in words used by Black himself almost immediately after the Everson decision. He remarked that the First Amendment does not prohibit a state from spending tax-raised funds "as part of a general program." Later, after mentioning some public services which every parochial school receives, he added these decisive words:

> Of course, cutting off church schools from these services so separate and so indisputably marked off from the religious function, would make it far more difficult for the schools to operate. But such is obviously not the purpose of the First Amendment. That Amendment requires the state to be neutral in its relations with groups of religious believers and non-believers; it does not require the state to be their adversary.

The other clauses of the First Amendment, that is freedom of speech, press, and assembly, admittedly operate as against the state through the Fourteenth Amendment. Thus if religious freedom or religious liberty were involved in the McCollum case, the Court would have had some precedent on which to stand. This was the only question before the Court, and the talk about an establishment of religion was entirely irrelevant. The Fourteenth Amendment does not authorize the Court to substitute the word "State" for "Congress" in the ban imposed by the First Amendment on laws "respecting an establishment of religion." So far as the Fourteenth Amendment is concerned, states are entirely free to establish religions or not, provided they do not deprive anybody of religious liberty.

There are several other oddities in the McCollum decision, which Justice Jackson recognized when he questioned the jurisdiction of the Court in the case. It seems that the Court recognized Mrs. McCollum as having the right to bring the case to it on two grounds: first as a taxpayer, and secondly to protect the rights of her son Terry, who at the age of eleven found himself a convinced atheist. As to the first, the Court has never favored taxpayer's suits, and for all that is shown, the schoolhouse involved in this case cost no more because some of its rooms were used one hour each week for religious instruction. In this connection, there is a strange discrepancy between the McCollum decision and the Lockport decision, handed down just three months later. In the latter, the Court held that a city ordinance forbidding the use of loudspeakers except with the permission of the Chief of Police was unconstitutional as applied to Jehovah's Witnesses who used sound equipment to amplify anti-Catholic lectures in a public park on Sundays. In the McCollum case the Court held that the school board could not constitutionally permit religious groups to use any part of a public school building to impart religious instruction, even to those desiring to receive it. Yet by the Lockport decision, the public authorities are now under a constitutional obligation to give Jehovah's Witnesses the use of public parks, so that they may broadcast their wares to all and sundry whether they wish to hear it or not.

What of the second element of the McCollum appeal for jurisdiction of the Court—the alleged "coercion" of Terry McCollum? To say that Terry was coerced into doing something that he did not in fact do, is to endow that word with a new meaning. Terry felt embarrassed because he did not avail himself of the released-time program, yet, as has been indicated, he, his parent, and any other person

interested were free to convene during the released-time hour to discuss current problems in atheism; and further, there is nothing in the Constitution to shield embarrassment due to unorthodoxy. Strangest of all, the Court implies that all the children were coerced —"recruited" is the Court's word. Does it not seem to be stretching the point to term an action by minors, done at parental behest, "coercion" or "recruitment"? It would seem that the decision in the McCollum case amounts to a prohibition of the "free exercise of religion"—something which, in definite language, is banned by the First Amendment.

In sum, the justification for the Court's intervention seems to be lacking in substance, based as it is on the "wall of separation between church and state." This figure of speech aside, the decision stems from an interpretation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment so novel and unprecedented as to have no roots in our history or our constitutional law. The Court's method in the McCollum case was less judicial than legislative. It interpreted church-state relations on grounds it considered to be wise and prudent, as do legislators, rather than on what is the supreme law of the land. It injected itself into what are essentially local or regional arrangements, democratically made by communities of citizens for the conduct of their schools. Contrary to previous cases under the freedom of religion clause, cases which dealt with the rights of individuals and minorities against the state, this was a matter of one child and his parent as against all the other children of the community. It was decided in favor of the one child, but one wonders what becomes of the freedom of religion of the other children involved.

An interpretation of the First Amendment which forbids any and all encouragement and aid to matters in some way connected with religion very definitely works a hardship upon those citizens who do not use the public schools, and to a lesser degree, upon those seven thousand communities which desire a released-time religious education program. But one may ask: what is the difference between discrimination, which the Fifth Amendment certainly forbids, and a hardship? Are the children who are passed up every day by the nonsectarian bus, undergoing a "hardship" or are they undergoing a "discrimination"? Why should the First Amendment work a hardship anyway? And if the hardship ensues because of the citizens' religious convictions, is not that an interference with the free exercise of his religion?

When the Framers voted to guarantee freedom of religion as

against the state, they meant that religion would be free to propagate itself. They did not mean that government would put obstacles in the way of its propagation. Government and religion, although properly distinct, were thought of as partners, not antagonists. The writers of the McCollum decision might well recall the words of Washington:

> Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. . . . Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.

DELEGATION OR CONSENT

T. E. Utley

No constitution, however rigid and precise, can be explained entirely in terms of a single theory of politics. Nothing, for example, is more deceptive than to speak of the American Constitution as the practical embodiment of the philosophy of natural rights or the principles of John Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government.* These judgments are very largely true, but they leave out of account many powerful factors, like the influence on the authors of the American Constitution of the Whiggism of the early eighteenth century, with its appeal to history rather than reason, or the aristocratic conservatism of Alexander Hamilton. The history of political ideas ought always to be distinguished as clearly as possible from the history of institutions. When it is suggested, as it will be in this article, that there is a broad distinction between the theory of government by consent, which is generally taken to be the basis of the British Constitution, and the theory of delegation, which is generally considered to be the foundation of the American political system, it is not implied that American and British institutions in practice derive from totally different sources. Clearly there is a sense in which the phrase "the Anglo-American constitutional tradition" might be used intelligibly. It is also true, however, that what may be called the American political myth, that is to say the body of doctrine and sentiment with which the American Constitution is popularly associated, is fundamentally different from the British political myth. It is with this division in the realm of theory and feeling that this article is concerned. The difference between the history of ideas and that of institutions becomes all the more important when the second part of the argument to be put forward here is considered. It will be suggested that the American political myth is merely one end of a tradition which reaches its logical extreme in the Jacobin conception of plebiscitiary democracy, of which modern Social Democrats and

Marxists have made much use. The democratic tradition, properly so-called, thus appears in two forms, both of which derive from the same premises, individualistic democracy, as reflected in the theory of the American Constitution, and collectivist democracy, as embodied in the plebiscitiary regimes which have arisen from time to time in Europe. The theory of government by consent which has been the main influence on British constitutional practice, on the other hand, has a quite different origin.

The democratic tradition derives from Locke. The essence of Locke's theory of politics consists of three propositions; first, that all men everywhere have fundamentally the same rights which derive their validity from natural law; secondly, that the task of interpreting and enforcing these rights falls, by virtue of an original social contract, on the whole body of the people deciding by a majority vote; and thirdly, that the powers of the State, whether legislative, judicial, or administrative, are conferred by society and may be withdrawn by the majority whenever it believes them to have been abused. Locke's philosophy was not designed as the blueprint of a constitution. It professes to explain the origin and provide the justification of political authority, and it is compatible with many different systems of government. It was in fact used to defend the ascendancy of the Whig aristocracy in England on the ground that it was to them that the people had delegated the task of government. It might as easily be used to justify a dictatorship. Nevertheless, its distinctive principle, that authority is delegated from below, produces democracy when translated into constitutional terms. Locke, however, attaches quite as much importance to the idea of natural law as to the principle of popular sovereignty. These two elements in his thoughts are indeed in perpetual conflict, and the subsequent development of the democratic tradition is to a large extent the story of the struggle between them. In its individualistic phase democracy emphasizes law; in its collectivist phase, popular authority. The American Constitution embodies both principles. It professes to derive its validity from a collective act of the popular will. Under its terms the people reserve to themselves ultimate control over all branches of government. Even the judicature is appointed by representatives of the people, i.e. the President and the Senate, and its members can in extreme cases be dismissed by impeachment by the people's representatives. The American Constitution gives almost equal weight to the doctrine of the supremacy of natural law. Since Locke conceived the people to be the guardians of a universal and unchanging system of rights, antecedent to society, it followed that all government was in its essence judicial. Legislation

was, or at least ought to be, interpretative rather than creative. This conception is expressed in the Bill of Rights and the position of the Supreme Court as the final custodian not merely of the Constitution but of the private rights of all American citizens. Most clearly of all it is expressed in the strict division of power between legislature, executive and judicature, which is intended to protect not merely the people as an entity against usurpation of their rights by their representatives, but also the individual against the dangers inseparable from the concentration of power.

The conflict between popular sovereignty and the supremacy of law was concealed in the eighteenth century by the doctrine, which in various forms dominated the rationalist movement of the period, that the interests of men tend naturally to harmonize, at least over a wide sphere. This theory, which found its economic expression in the writings of Adam Smith, reduced the functions of government and therefore the occasions for exercising popular sovereignty to the minimum. In general, it was held, men could be left to fend for themselves in the certain knowledge that competition would lead to the greatest good of society. Only on the rare occasions when one man's liberty could be plainly shown to be another man's servitude should the state intervene, and when it did so it would not be to establish some new principle of social organization but merely to enforce the natural law. Sometimes this might involve legislation, but this would be conceived as an application of the natural law to some new case not already provided for by positive law. Locke and his disciples regarded the origins of legislation somewhat as follows. A dispute arises between two individuals over their respective rights under natural law. It cannot be settled by agreement so they submit it to the body of their fellow-citizens, the majority of whom, not being personally involved, may be presumed to be impartial. After due deliberation they decide, by counting heads, who is in the right. As society increases in size and complexity, however, it is impossible for all the citizens to meet together to decide disputed cases, so they delegate the power to do so to regularly constituted organs of government. A legislature is established to lay down in general terms what the natural law is, a judicature to interpret the rules of the legislature and an executive to enforce them. All these organs of government, however, have fundamentally the same purpose, to maintain a universal and unchanging system of rights which derives its validity from the constitution of the universe. Within the broad framework provided by this system men can remain in their natural state, one of absolute freedom from external authority. An important consequence

follows from this view of the nature of government. All those who hold office in the state will be regarded not as mere servants of the majority with detailed instructions but as trustees with discretionary power. Locke did not conceive of the people as an entity with a will of its own which the legislature could ascertain in advance and proceed to apply, but as a body of individuals, each equipped with a conscience which when properly attended to enabled him to discern justice.

Because, according to Locke's conception of society, all rights and interests ultimately belong to individuals and because all groups, including society itself, amount to nothing more than the sum total of their members, each member of the legislature must be as free as possible to defend what he regards as the interests of his constituents. Individualistic democracy is therefore hostile to a disciplined party system, since such a system limits the freedom of the legislator to act as guardian of his constituents' rights and to exercise his conscience as the repository of an ultimately judicial authority in whatever cases come before him. For the same reason, individualistic democracy is always suspicious of the influence of the executive over legislation. Now a constitution which gives the maximum freedom of action to the individual legislator *vis à vis* both the executive and all other legislators also increases his authority in relation to his constituents. A legislature which consists of say six hundred genuinely independent members is almost entirely unpredictable. It is impossible to know in advance what matters will be brought before it or what its reactions will be. It can act only when the majority of its members are ready to concert together for some purpose, and such agreement will usually be brought about as a result of a long and elaborate process of argument between individual members. It is hard for a legislature so constituted to follow a consistent policy over long periods. Individual members may be under pressure from their constituents to favor particular cases, but their ability to do so will depend on their being able to get the support of their colleagues for them, and this necessity ensures them a large immunity from popular control. At least until very recent times, for example, American political parties were heterogeneous societies, seldom distinguished by any clearly defined difference in principle or policy. All American legislation is in theory private legislation, proposed by individual members on their own authority; and the function of the executive is in theory to carry out the demands of Congress, not to elicit the popular will and impose it on Congress. In individualistic democracies, therefore, the function of government is fiduciary rather than mandatory.

By the end of the eighteenth century the optimistic doctrine that human rights naturally tend to harmonize when men are left free to pursue their own interests had begun to be challenged. The Jacobin Terror in revolutionary France marks its abandonment by the vanguard of the progressive movement. From then onwards the heirs of the democratic tradition thought of the natural order, with its absolute harmony of interests, as something which could be achieved only by deliberate planning and coercion, at least until the people had by a long and deliberate process of re-education come to desire and work for the common good spontaneously. Until that happened there would be continual clashes between them in the exercise of their liberty. The state would have to intervene constantly to harmonize interests which would otherwise be in perpetual conflict. It would have repeatedly to redefine and enforce the natural rights and duties of man instead of merely stepping in to redress particular injustices. Legislation would become a normal activity, not a rare necessity. Natural law could no longer be regarded as a static body of clearly-defined rules requiring judicial application to particular cases, but rather as a dynamic principle which adapts itself continually to changing conditions.

When the function of the legislature comes to be regarded not as that of an arbiter in private disputes but as that of a general regulator and director of social activity, the problem of ensuring its impartiality becomes far more difficult. In an individualistic society, where it is assumed that within a constant framework of law men may, as a general rule, be left free to compete without fear of their interests colliding, it is reasonable to hold that when interests do collide the common sense of the majority of the legislature will be the best guide to justice. After all, the majority of the legislature may be presumed to have no particular sectional interest in most of the bills which come before it. It will therefore be free to discern and apply the natural law impartially. In a collectivist society, however, legislation becomes public, or in other words, most of the bills coming before the legislature will concern the general regulation of society, and will therefore affect the private interests of every citizen and every legislator. In such a society the people are likely to insist on a far larger and more direct control over legislation.

The transition between individualist and collectivist democracy was accomplished on the plane of political theory by Rousseau. For natural law Rousseau substituted the general will of the community as the ultimate criterion of justice. When these concepts are analyzed the difference between them does not appear as great as at first sight.

The general will may be broadly defined as the true collective interest of the community. Rousseau does not identify it with the conscious will of any section of society or even suggest that it would necessarily be expressed in a unanimous judgment by all members of society. Like natural law, it is a disembodied principle. That Rosseau prefers to use the term "general will" rather than "natural law" is due solely to his desire to emphasize the dynamic quality of justice. The general will wills pure justice and never contradicts itself. It wills the realization of the natural order, that is to say the absolute harmony of interests which the early eighteenth-century rationalists expected to result from spontaneous competition, but which is now sought through the action of the state. Because the task of reconciling interests must now be performed by the state, legislation begins to be regarded as creative rather than interpretative. The nature of justice does not change but the forms in which it is expressed must be continually adapted to changing conditions. Like Locke, Rousseau held that the source of all legitimate authority is the will of the majority. He admits that even the majority may err, since it may be diverted from pursuing the welfare of the community by private passion or sectional interest. Nevertheless, in a society where sectional interests are kept as weak as possible and where public attention is constantly fixed on genuinely public questions, that is questions affecting the welfare of society as a whole, he believes that the decision of the majority is likely to be right. There is one important difference between Locke's and Rousseau's conceptions of the nature of delegated authority. According to Locke government is a trust, according to Rousseau it is a function which ought, wherever possible, to be exercised in strict accordance with the will of those who bestow it. In theory the difference may seem slight, but in practice it is fundamental. Up to a point Locke's attitude towards political authority is deferential, a fact which explains the readiness with which the English Whig aristocracy accepted him as their prophet. He regards those who hold office in the state as men entrusted with a discretionary power to interpret and administer the known law, whether as in the case of the legislature, it is the unwritten natural law, or, as in the case of the judicature, the positive law. Those who appoint these men do not in theory issue instructions to them. On the contrary, the people are bound to obey their representatives until, by abusing their trust, they forfeit their right to office. Thus Locke still regards a revolution as a punitive action against traitors, not as an act of policy or a means of social regeneration. Admittedly, when Locke's principles received constitutional expression, as for example in the American

Constitution, this conception of office as a trust had to be modified. No one suggests that an elector is bound to go on voting for his sitting member of Congress until that member forfeits the confidence of the electorate by dishonorable conduct. Yet the theory does survive that in casting a vote the elector is choosing a person rather than authorizing a policy. Rousseau, on the other hand, was profoundly suspicious of representatives. The best kind of government, he held, was a pure democracy, that is to say one in which all the citizens legislated for themselves in person. Where this could not be achieved the best alternative was a plebiscitary democracy, that is to say a democracy in which the legislature was kept under the strictest control by the people, being conceived as an instrument of the popular will rather than the repository of a trust.

It might seem that the cleavage between individualist democracy, as represented by Locke, and collectivist democracy, as represented by Rousseau, is now so complete that their common ancestry is a matter of purely antiquarian interest, but there are in fact strong resemblances between them even now. Both, for example, rest on the rationalist assumption that the only real entities in politics are the individual at one extreme and the state at the other. This makes their adherents look with suspicion on the claims of historic communities for special representation, and of corporations within the state for special rights over their members. At first this may seem to be untrue of American liberalism, which has always crusaded passionately for the rights of small nations and for the principle of self-determination. Yet this very phrase shows that the rights which American liberals claim for nations are derivative from democracy, not antecedent to it. Romantic nationalism, of course, has played an important part in shaping American opinion on foreign policy, but it remains true that the principle of self-determination is in essence a democratic, not a nationalistic principle. Fundamentally it means not that the nation, conceived as an entity, should be politically independent, but that individuals should be free, if they want to, to form themselves into political communities. Furthermore, in upholding national rights, American liberals have never regarded themselves as defending national sovereignty. They have always thought of nations as being free only within the limits of universal natural law. It is this theory of a universal law, transcending national customs, which explains the inclusion in the peace treaties of 1946 of clauses designed to impose on the signatories the duty of ensuring certain fundamental rights, including political democracy, to their subjects. It is this same preoccupation which explains the impatience of many American

liberals at the reluctance of Western Europe to form itself into a federation. It is true that federations are in their nature decentralized, and that the rights given to the member states might be cited as proof that federalism does not recognize units as being entitled to political independence, but the states of the American federation are for the most part not historic communities, and their rights are regarded not as inherent but as deriving from the Constitution, which in turn derives from the whole people. In the eyes of orthodox federalists, who base themselves on the individualistic democracy of Locke, provincial states are convenient administrative units, not organic personalities. The same suspicion of local and corporate interests is reflected in the early adoption by the United States of the principle of equal constituencies, in the drive against economic monopolies, and in the slow growth of trade unionism. All this is equally true of the other branch of democracy, the collectivist, which goes back to Rousseau, and achieves its contemporary expression in left-wing social-democratic movements and communism. Modern collectivist democracies are equally suspicious of nationality and of vested interests within the state. Just as the logical expression of American liberal idealism is the idea of a universal federation, so the final and avowed object of collectivist democracy is a universal, social-democratic state. The satellite states of Eastern Europe, which profess to be plebiscitiary democracies, are already engaged in eliminating all organized centers of independent group life within their jurisdiction. If ideology were the only factor to be considered in politics the stage would now be set for a world conflict between individualist and collectivist democracies, both of which are built on the same foundations, the belief that rights are universal and individual, and the doctrine that power is delegated from below.

The principle of government by consent, which is generally believed to be embodied in the British Constitution, does not belong to either of the categories discussed above. In one sense of the phrase it may be said that most English political theorists have accepted the view that the final source of just authority within the state is the people, but the meaning which most of them have attached to the word "people" is totally different from that of either Locke or Rousseau. To both Locke and Rousseau the people are in the last analysis a mass of equal units, though Rousseau believed that on entering society they generated something which he called the general will but which was in many respects hard to distinguish from Locke's natural law. To the Conservative school of British political thought, and it is this school which has dominated British constitutional

theory, the people is an organic whole composed of families, professional groups and social classes, each of which is a repository of rights and duties. Constitutionally this organic theory of the State finds expression in the sovereignty of "the king in Parliament," a body composed of three entities, king, Lords and Commons, which is nevertheless deemed capable of willing and acting as a unit. In this combination the function of the Crown, far from being purely executive, is to initiate government in all its branches. The fundamental division in the theory of the British Constitution is between the active and initiating elements in government and the passive and critical elements. The Crown initiates; it appoints the executive, theoretically without interference from Parliament; it summons, prorogues and dissolves the legislature; and it also appoints the judicature. Parliament, on the other hand, is the chief passive and critical element in the Constitution. Its function is regarded as being primarily to criticize, and when necessary dismiss, governments presented to it by the king. In returning members to the House of Commons, the electorate is therefore primarily choosing not legislators but critics.

In practice, as time goes on, the British Constitution tends more and more to conform to the essentials of this description. Today the effective powers of the Crown have devolved on the Cabinet, but the nature of those powers has not changed. Furthermore, with the steady development of the two-party system the critical function of the Commons has been emphasized. To an ever increasing and even an excessive extent legislation has become Government legislation, and in general the Commons has the alternative of accepting Government bills or dismissing the Government. Bagehot said that when the Commons had dismissed a Cabinet it acquired the positive function of electing a successor, but this is not true, either theoretically or in practice. In theory it is the king who chooses the prime minister; and though in practice he has to choose the leader of the largest party, or, when the largest party has resigned from office, the leader of the Opposition, this is far from being the same thing as accepting the nominee of the Commons. In many cases a free vote of the House of Commons would produce a different prime minister, since the minority party, certain that its own candidate could not form a government, would ally with the dissidents in the majority party in order to get a man more acceptable to their taste than the leader of that party. Even when the Cabinet resigns, therefore, the Commons has no power of initiation. It must wait for the government which providence provides and then decide whether or not to retain it. The same principle applies to the electorate in its choice of members of parlia-

ment. In practice the two-party system restricts it to two alternatives. This principle has some dangers. Since the two main parties define their policies before an election, the assumption is sometimes made that in returning one of them to power the electorate is in effect conferring a mandate on it to carry out its program in detail and without deviation, and this assumption pressed too far leads to plebiscitiary democracy in the Rousseau tradition. That it has not yet been pressed to this extreme is due to the importance of the constituency in the British Constitution. A parliamentary candidate must be approved both by party headquarters and by the local association. The object of party headquarters is to choose a man of amenable disposition; the object of the local association is to choose a man who may be trusted to represent faithfully the interests of the constituency. The constituency is still conceived, though to a dangerously diminishing extent, as a genuine social entity, not a mere aggregation of people. The power of the local association to veto a candidate approved by party headquarters thus enlarges the choice of that section of the electorate which is sufficiently interested in politics to belong to a party. What is more important, it increases the independence of the M.P., who, poised between the party leadership and his constituents, can sometimes succeed in playing his masters off against each other.

The principle of government by consent operates as follows. The Cabinet initiates legislation, Parliament, the chief element in which is the House of Commons, criticizes and where necessary rejects it. The constituencies choose, first, the parties of which Parliament is to be made up, secondly, in consultation with party headquarters, the men of whom those parties are made up. Because the prime minister has the power to dissolve Parliament and to impose on its members the hazards and expenses of an election, the House cannot lightly reject government legislation, and up to a point must submit to the leadership of the Cabinet. Because the M.P. has a direct line to his own constituents and is a representative of their special interests as well as a member of a party, the Cabinet cannot flout the Commons with impunity. The function of the Cabinet is to lead the Commons, that of the Commons to criticize the Cabinet and lead the country.

Unlike individualist or collectivist democracy, the British conception of Government is empirical rather than dogmatic. It recognizes the supremacy of law, but it does not conceive law, as Locke did, as a body of abstract principles of universal validity, or, as Rousseau did, as a dynamic will. The rights which it sets out to preserve are based on custom and submitted to the test of utility. Far from being hostile to

the claims of historic communities or corporations, it regards nationality as the natural basis of the state, and corporate interests not as dangerous obstacles between the individual and his loyalty to the community but as the links by which individuals are bound together in society.

The fundamental problem to be faced by all forms of popular government is how to ensure to public opinion an effective influence on policy. Individualist and collectivist democracy both seek to do this by making the people the initial source of authority. The people, however, is in much the same position as the little girl who said: "How do I know what I think until I hear what I say?" Public opinion has to be expressed before it exists; until it is expressed it is merely an agglomeration of contradictory private opinions. Since it cannot be hammered out in open debate between all the members of society some other means must be found of eliciting it. In individualist democracy the means is an elected assembly whose members are conceived as having wide discretionary power. Public opinion is therefore discovered not at a general election but as a result of a general election. The people's initial power of choice is a choice between persons, not policies. The distinctive merits of the system are that it prevents concentration of power and enables a wide variety of opinions to find expression in the legislature. Its chief defects are that it weakens the executive and makes it hard for the individual elector to express effective judgments on national policy as a whole. The chief merits of collectivist or plebiscitiary democracy are that it makes government effective and enables the people to pronounce on general matters of policy. Its chief and overwhelming defects are that it tends to produce permanent tyranny, and, by confronting the people with a choice of rigid and clearly-defined policies, favors political extremism, denies local and sectional interests adequate representation, and eliminates the independence of the individual legislator.

The essence of the British principle of government by consent is its frank recognition that public opinion can be effective only in so far as it is confined to passive choice. Because it recognizes this limitation from the outset, it may claim to give a wider range of effective choice to the electorate than either of its rivals. Confronted by the question of whether the electorate shall decide policy or choose persons, it answers it by authorizing them to do both in due proportion. It is not for a moment suggested that the British Constitution should be the model for all future experiments in popular government. It is suggested, however, that it has two important and distinctive contributions to make. The individualistic philosophy of Locke is not easily

adapted to the demands of a modern community, and when its failure becomes apparent it tends to develop, not by reaction but by its own internal logic, into the plebiscitiary democracy of Rousseau. The British theory of government by consent suggests a method, capable of infinitely various expression, of halting the process halfway and of combining the advantages of a free and independent legislature with a stable executive and a final control of policy by the electorate. Secondly, just because the political theory out of which the principle of government by consent arises is empirical, just because it regards the function of the state as being to strike a fair balance between contending interests, rather than to enforce universal and abstract principles of justice, it is less dogmatic and less exclusive in its claims than either Locke's or Rousseau's democracy. Its emphasis in foreign affairs on nationality and the balance of power may yet enable it to fill a mediating role between American liberalism and European communism.

THE PEOPLE AND THE STATE

Jacques Maritain

THERE IS NO more thankless task than trying rationally to distinguish and to circumscribe, trying to raise to a scientific or philosophical level, common notions that have arisen from the contingent practical needs of human history and are laden with social, cultural, and historical connotations as ambiguous as they are fertile, and which nevertheless envelop a core of intelligible meaning. Such concepts are nomadic, not fixed; they are shifting and fluid. Now they are used synonymously, now in opposition to each other. Everybody is the more at ease in using them as he does not know exactly what they mean. But as soon as you try to define them and separate them from one another, problems and difficulties arise in a swarm. You run the risk of being switched onto a wrong track while attempting to bring out the truth, and to make analytical and systematized what has been conveyed to you by confused experience and concrete life.

The preceding remarks[1] apply strikingly to the notions of Nation, Body Politic (or Political Society), and State. Yet nothing is more necessary, for a sound political philosophy, than to try to sort out these three notions, and clearly circumscribe the genuine meaning of each.

Often when we speak in the current, more or less vague manner, these three concepts are used, and can be legitimately used, as synonymous with one another. But when it comes to their genuine meaning for sociology and for political theory, they must be sharply distinguished. The confusion between, or the systematic identification of, Nation and Political Society, or Political Society and State, or Nation and State, has been a woe to modern history. A correct restatement of the three concepts in question is badly needed. The

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[1] This essay was first delivered as a lecture for the Charles R. Walgreen Foundation at the University of Chicago, and will be included in a book of the same title to be published by the University of Chicago Press.

aridity of my analysis may perhaps be excused, therefore, on account of the importance of the principles in political philosophy of which it may make us aware.

A preliminary distinction must be made, namely between community and society. Of course these two terms may licitly be used synonymously, and I myself have done so many times. But it is also licit—and proper—to assign them to two kinds of social groups which are different in nature. This distinction, though it has been misused in the most grievous manner by the theorists of the superiority of "life" over reason, is in itself an established sociological fact. Both community and society are ethico-social and truly human, not mere biological realities. But a community is more of a work of nature and more nearly related to the biological; a society is more of a work of reason, and more nearly related to the intellectual and spiritual properties of man. Their inner social essence and their characteristics, as well as their spheres of realization, do not coincide.

In order to understand this distinction, we must remember that social life as such brings men together by reason of a certain common object. In social relations there is always an object, either material or spiritual, around which the relations between human persons are interwoven. In a community, as J. T. Delos has rightly pointed out,[2] the object is a fact which precedes the determinations of human intelligence and will, and which acts independently of them to create a common unconscious psyche, common feelings and psychological structures, and common mores. But in a society the object is a task to be done or an end to be aimed at, which depends on the determinations of human intelligence and will is preceded by the activity—decision, or, at least, consent—of the reason of individuals, so that in the case of society the objective and rational element in social life explicitly emerges and takes the leading role. A business firm, a labor union, a scientific association are societies as much as is the body politic. Regional, ethnic, linguistic groups, social classes are communities. The tribe, the clan are communities that pave the way for, and foreshadow the advent of, the political society. The community is a product of instinct and heredity in given circumstances and historical frameworks; the society a product of reason and moral strength (what the Ancients called "virtue").

In the community, social relations proceed from given historical situations and environments: the collective patterns of feeling—or the

[2] Cf. J. T. Delos, *La Nation* (Montreal, L'Arbre, 1944).

collective unconscious psyche—have the upper hand on personal consciousness, and man appears as a product of the social group. In society personal consciousness retains priority, the social group is shaped by men, and social relations proceed from a given initiative, a given idea and voluntary determination of human persons.

Even in natural societies such as the family society and political society, that is, in societies that are both necessarily required and spontaneously rough-hewn by nature, society finally springs up from human freedom. Even in communities, regional communities, for instance, or vocational communities, that grow around some particular society like an industrial or commercial establishment, community springs up from nature; I mean from the reaction and adjustment of human nature to a given historical environment, or to the factual impact of the industrial or commercial society in question upon the natural conditioning of human existence. In society social pressure derives from law or rational regulations, or from an idea of the common aim; it calls forth personal conscience and liberty, which must obey the law freely. In the community social pressure derives from coercion imposing patterns of conduct on man and comes into play in a deterministic mode.

A society always gives rise to communities and community feelings within or around itself. Never can a community develop into a society, though it can be the natural soil from which some societal organizations springs up through reason.

Now the Nation is a community, not a society. The Nation is one of the most important, perhaps the most complex and complete community engendered by civilized life. Modern times have been faced with a conflicting tension between the Nation and another momentous human community, the Class; yet, as a matter of fact, the dynamism of the Nation has appeared to be the stronger because it is more deeply rooted in nature.

The word nation originates from the Latin *nasci,* that is, from the notion of birth, but the nation is not something biological, like the Race. It is something ethico-social: a human community based on the fact of birth and lineage, yet with all the moral connotations of those terms: birth to the life of reason and the activities of civilization, lineage in familial traditions, social and juridical formation, cultural heritage, common conceptions and manners, historical recollections, sufferings, claims, hopes, prejudices and resentments. An ethnic community, generally speaking, can be defined as a community of patterns of feeling rooted in the physical soil of the origin of the

group as well as in the moral soil of history. It becomes a nation when this factual situation enters the sphere of self-awareness, in other words when the ethnic group becomes conscious of the fact that it constitutes a community of patterns of feeling, or rather has a common unconscious psyche, and possesses its own unity and individuality, its own will to endure in existence. A nation is a community of people who become aware of themselves just as history has made them, who treasure their own past, and love themselves as they know or imagine themselves to be, with a kind of inevitable introversion. This progressive awakening of national consciousness has been a characteristic feature of modern history. Though it is normal and good in itself, it finally became exacerbated and gave rise to the plague of Nationalism, while—and probably because—the concept of Nation and the concept of State had been confused and mixed up in an unfortunate and explosive manner.

The Nation has or had a soil, a land. This does not mean, as for the State, a territorial area of power and administration, but a cradle of life, work, pain, and dreams. The Nation has a language, though the linguistic groups by no means always coincide with the national ones. The Nation thrives on institutions, the creation of which, however, depends more on the human person and mind, or the family, or particular groups in the society, or the body politic, than on the Nation itself. The Nation has rights, which are but the rights of human persons to participate in the peculiar human values of a national heritage. The Nation has an historic calling, which is not its own calling (as if there were primordial and predestined national monads each of which were possessed of a supreme mission), but which is only an historical and contingent particularization of man's vocation to the unfolding and manifestation of his own multifarious potentialities.

Yet for all that the Nation is not a society; it does not cross the threshold of the political realm. It is a community of communities, a self-aware network of common feelings and representations that human nature and instinct have caused to swarm around a number of physical, historical and social data. Like any other community, the Nation is "acephalous."[3] It has elites and centers of influence, no head or ruling authority; structures, no rational form or juridical organization; passions and dreams, no common good; solidarity between its members, faithfulness, honor, no civic friendship; manners and mores, no formal norms and order. It does not appeal to the freedom and responsibility of personal conscience, it instils in human persons

[3] Cf. M. Hauriou, *Principes de Droit Constitutionnel* (Paris, 1923), p. 29.

a second nature. It is a general pattern in private life, it does not know any principle of public order. Thus it is that in reality the national group cannot transform itself into a political society: a political society can progressively differentiate itself within a confused social life in which political functions and community activities were first mixed up; the idea of the body politic can arise in the bosom of a national community; but the national community can only be a propitious soil and an occasion for that blossoming. In itself the idea of the body politic belongs to another, superior order. As soon as the body politic exists, it is something other than a national community.

The preceding analysis makes us realize how serious have been for modern history the confusion between Nation and State, the myth of the National State, and the so-called principle of Nationalities understood in the sense that each national group must set itself up as a separate state.[4] Such a confusion has wrenched both Nation and State out of shape. The trouble began in the democratic theater, during the nineteenth century. It came to full madness in the anti-democratic reaction of the present century. Let us consider the result in the most acute cases.

Uprooted from its essential order, and therefore losing its natural limits in the course of an anti-natural growth, the Nation has become an earthly divinity whose absolute selfishness is sacred, and it has used political power to subvert any steady order among peoples. The State, when it has been identified with the Nation, or even with the Race, and when the fever of the instincts of the earth has thus invaded its own blood, the State has had its will to power exasperated. It has presumed to impose by force of law the so-called type and genius of the Nation, thus becoming a cultural, ideological, caesaro-papist, totalitarian State. At the same time that totalitarian State has degenerated by losing the sense of the objective order of justice and law, and swerving toward what is peculiar to tribal as well as to feudal community achievements. For the universal and objective ties of law and for the specific relationship between the individual person and the political body, have been substituted personal ties, derived from blood, or from a particular commitment of man to man or to the clan, the party, or the chief.

I have just emphasized the distinction between that sociological reality which is a National Community and that other sociological reality which is a Political Society. It must now be added that, as I have previously remarked, the existence of a given society naturally

[4] Cf. René Johannet, *Le Principe des Nationalités* (Paris, 1918).

calls forth the birth of new communities within or around that societal group. Thus, when a political society has been formed, especially when it has a century-old experience strengthening genuine civic friendship, it naturally gives rise, within itself, to a National Community of a higher degree, either with regard to the self-awareness of such an already existing community, or with regard to the very formation of a new National community in which various nationalities have been melted up. Thus, to the exact contrary of the so-called principle of nationalities, here the Nation depends on the existence of the body politic, not the body politic on the existence of the Nation. The Nation does not become a State. The State causes the Nation to be. Thus it is that a multinational Federation of States, as is the United States, is at the same time a multinational Nation. A genuine principle of nationalities would be formulated as follows: the body politic should develop both its own moral dynamism and the respect for human freedoms to such a point that the national communities which are contained within itself would both have their natural rights fully recognized, and spontaneously tend to merge in a single higher and more complex National Community.

Let us compare from this point of view four significant instances: Germany, the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, France and the United States. Germany is a complex of nations, and has been unable to bring about a genuine body politic; it has made up for that frustration by an unnatural exaltation of the National feeling and an unnatural Nation-State. The Austro-Hungarian double crown created a State but was unable to produce a Nation. France and the United States enjoyed particularly favorable circumstances, as well as a sense of freedom and of the basic role of free choice or consent by people in political life. In each case this helped to produce a single Nation centered on the body politic, a Nation which achieved unity, either as a result of century-old trials or of a ceaseless process of self-creation. So for practical purposes we may use the expression the American Nation, the French Nation, to denote the American or French political body. Yet such a practical synonymity must not deceive us, and make us forget the fundamental distinction between National Community and Political Society.

In contradistinction to the Nation, both the Body Politic and the State pertain to the order of society, even society in its highest or "perfect" form. In our modern age the two terms are used synonymously, and the second tends to supersede the first. Yet if we are to avoid serious misunderstandings, we have to distinguish clearly be-

tween the State and the Body Politic. These do not belong to two diverse categories, but they differ from each other as a part differs from the whole. The Body Politic or the Political Society is the whole. The State is a part—the topmost part—of this whole.

Political society, required by nature and achieved by reason, is the most perfect of temporal societies. It is a concretely and wholly human reality, tending to a concretely and wholly human good, the common good. It is a work of reason, born out of the obscure efforts of reason disengaged from instinct, and implying essentially a rational order; but it is no more Pure Reason than man himself. The body politic has flesh and blood, instincts, passions, reflexes, unconscious psychological structures and dynamism, all of these submitted, if necessary by legal coercion, to the command of an Idea and Reason's decisions. Justice is a primary condition for the existence of the body politic, but Friendship is its very life-giving form. It tends to a really human and freely achieved communion. It lives on the devotion of the human persons and their gift of themselves. They are ready to commit their own existence, their possessions and their honor for its sake. The civic sense is made up of that sense of devotion and mutual love as well as of the sense of justice and law.

The entire man, though not by reason of his entire self and of all that he is and has, is part of the political society; and thus all his community activities as well as his personal activities are of consequence to the political whole. As we have pointed out, a national community of a higher human degree spontaneously takes shape by virtue of the very existence of the body politic, and in turn becomes part of the substance of the latter. Nothing matters more, in the order of material causality, to the life and preservation of the body politic, than the accumulated energy and historical continuity of that national community it has itself caused to exist. This means chiefly a heritage of accepted and unquestionable structures, fixed customs and deep-rooted common feelings which bring into social life itself something of the determined physical data of nature, and of the vital unconscious strength proper to vegetative organisms. It is, further, common inherited experience and the moral and intellectual instincts which constitute a kind of empirical practical wisdom, much deeper and denser and much nearer the hidden complex dynamism of human life than any artificial construction of reason.

Not only is the national community, as well as all communities of the nation, thus comprised in the superior unity of the body politic. But the body politic contains also in its superior unity the family units, whose essential rights and freedoms are anterior to itself, and

a multiplicity of other particular societies which proceed from the free initiative of citizens, and should be as autonomous as possible. Such is the element of pluralism inherent in every truly political society. Family, economic, cultural, educational, religious life matter as much as does political life to the very existence and prosperity of the body politic. Every kind of law, from the spontaneous, unformulated group regulations to customary law and to law in the full sense of the term, contributes to the vital order of political society. Since in political society authority comes from below, through the people, it is normal that the whole dynamism of authority in the body politic should be made up of particular or partial authorities rising in tiers above each other, up to the top authority of the State. Finally the public welfare and the general order of law are essential parts of the common good of the body politic, but this common good has far larger and richer, more concretely human implications, for it is by nature the good human life of the multitude, and is common to both the whole and the parts, the persons into whom it flows back and who must benefit from it. The common good is not only the collection of public commodities and services which organization of common life presupposes such as sound fiscal condition, a strong military force; the body of just laws, good customs and wise institutions which provide the political society with its structure; the heritage of its great historical rememberances, its symbols and its glories, its living traditions and cultural treasures. The common good also includes the sociological integration of all the civic conscience, political virtues and sense of law and freedom, of all the activity, material prosperity and spiritual riches, of unconsciously operating hereditary wisdom, of moral rectitude, justice, friendship, happiness, virtue and heroism in the individual lives of the members of the body politic. To the extent to which all these things are, in a certain measure, communicable and revert to each member, helping him to perfect his life and liberty as a person, they all constitute the good human life of the multitude.[5]

From this enumeration of the features of the body politic, it should be evident that the body politic differs from the State. The State is only that part of the body politic especially concerned with the maintenance of law, the promotion of the common welfare and public order and the administration of public affairs. The State is a part which specializes in the interests of the whole. It is not a man or a body of men; it is a set of institutions combined into a topmost machine: this kind of work of art has been built by man and uses

[5] Cf. our book, *The Person and the Common Good* (New York, Scribner, 1947).

human brains and energies and is nothing without man, but it constitutes a superior embodiment of reason, an impersonal, lasting superstructure the functioning of which may be said to be rational in the second degree, insofar as the reason's activity in it, bound by law and by a system of universal regulations, is more abstract, more sifted out from the contingencies of experience and individuality, more pitiless also, than in our individual lives.

The State is not the supreme incarnation of the Idea, as Hegel believed; the State is not a kind of collective superman; the State is but an agency entitled to use power and coercion, and made up of experts or specialists in public order and welfare, an instrument in the service of man. Putting man at the service of that instrument is political perversion. The human person as an individual is for the body politic and the body politic is for the human person as a person. But man is by no means for the State. The State is for man.

When we say that the State is the superior part in the body politic, this means that it is superior to the other organs or collective parts of this body, but it does not mean that it is superior to the body politic itself. The part as such is inferior to the whole. The State is inferior to the body politic as a whole, and is at the service of the body politic as a whole. Is the State even the head of the body politic? Hardly, for in the human being the head is an instrument of such spiritual powers as the intellect and the will, which the whole body has to serve; whereas the functions exercised by the State are for the body politic, and not the body politic for them.

The theory which I have just summarized, and which regards the State as a part or an instrument of the body politic, subordinate to it and endowed with topmost authority not by its own right and for its own sake, but only by virtue and to the extent of the requirements of the common good, can be described as an "instrumentalist" theory, founding the genuinely political notion of the State. But we are confronted with quite another notion, the despotic notion of the State, based on a "substantialist" or "absolutist" theory. According to this theory the State is a subject of right or a moral person, and consequently a whole; as a result it is either superimposed on the body politic or made to absorb the body politic entirely, and it enjoys supreme power by virtue of its own natural, inalienable right and for its own final sake.

Of course there is for everything great and powerful an instinctive tendency—and a special temptation—to grow beyond its own limits. Power tends to increase power, the power machine tends ceaselessly to extend itself; the supreme legal and administrative machine tends

toward bureaucratic self-sufficiency; it would like to consider itself an end, not a means. Those who specialize in the affairs of the whole have a propensity to take themselves for the whole; the general staffs to take themselves for the whole army, the Church authorities for the whole Church; the State for the whole body politic. By the same token, the State tends to ascribe to itself a peculiar common good, its own self-preservation and growth, distinct from both the public order and welfare which is its immediate end, and from the common good which is its final end. All those misfortunes are but instances of "natural" excess or abuse.

But there has been something much more specific and serious in the development of the substantialist or absolutist theory of the State. This development can be understood only in the perspective of modern history and as a sequel to the structures and conceptions peculiar to the Mediaeval Empire, to the absolute monarchy of the French classical age, and the absolute government of the Stuart kings in England. Remarkably enough, the very word State only appeared in the course of modern history; the notion of the State was implicitly involved in the ancient concept of city (πόλις, civitas) which meant essentially body politic, and still more in the Roman concept of the Empire, it was never explicitly brought out in Antiquity. According to an historical pattern unfortunately most frequent, both the normal development of the State, which was in itself a sound and genuine progress, and the development of the spurious (absolutist) juridical and philosophical conception of the State took place at the same time.

An adequate explanation of that historical process would require a long and thorough analysis. Here I merely suggest that in the Middle Ages the authority of the Emperor, and in early modern times the authority of the absolute King, descended from above on the body politic, upon which it was superimposed. Political authority was the privilege of a superior "social race" which had a right—and believed it to be an innate or immediately God-given and inalienable right—to supreme power over and leadership and moral guidance of the body politic, made up, it was assumed, of people under age who were able to make requests, remonstrances or riots, not to govern themselves. So, while the reality of the State and the sense of the State progressively took shape as great juridical achievements, the concept of the State emerged more or less confusedly as the concept of a whole (sometimes identified with the person of the king) which was superimposed on or which enveloped the body politic and enjoyed

supreme power by virtue of its own natural and inalienable right, in other words, which possessed sovereignty. For in the genuine sense of this word, which depends on the historical formation of the concept of sovereignty, prior to jurists' various definitions, sovereignty implies not only actual possession of and right to supreme power but also a right which is natural or innate or immediately God-given, and inalienable, to a supreme power which is supreme, separate from and above its subjects.[6]

At the time of the French Revolution that very concept of the State considered as a whole unto itself was preserved, but it shifted from the King to the Nation, mistakenly identified with the body politic; hence Nation, Body Politic and State were identified. And the very concept of sovereignty as a natural or innate and inalienable right to supreme transcendent power was preserved, but shifted from the King to the Nation. At the same time, by virtue of a voluntarist theory of law and political society, which had its acme in eighteenth century philosophy, the State was made into a person (a so-called moral person) and a subject of right, in such a way that the attribute of absolute sovereignty, ascribed to the Nation, was inevitably, as a matter of fact, to be claimed and exercised by the State.

Thus it is that in modern times the despotic or absolutist notion of the State was largely accepted among democratic tenets by the theorists of democracy—pending the advent of Hegel, the prophet and theologian of the totalitarian, divinized State. In England John Austin's theories only tended to tame and civilize somewhat the old Hobbesian *Leviathan*. This process of acceptance was favored by a symbolical property which genuinely belongs to the State, namely, the fact that, just as we say twenty head of cattle meaning twenty animals, in the same way the topmost part in the body politic naturally represents the political whole. Nay more, the notion of the latter is raised to a higher degree of abstraction and symbolization, and the consciousness of the political society is raised to a more completely individualized idea of itself in the idea of the State. In the absolutist notion of the State that symbol has been made a reality, has been hypostasied. According to this notion the State is a metaphysical monad, a person; it is a whole unto itself, the political whole in its supreme degree of unity and individuality. So it absorbs in itself the body politic from which it emanates, as well as all the individual or particular wills which, according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, have

[6]This point forms the subject of a separate paper on the notion of sovereignty, which will be published in the *American Political Science Review*.

engendered the General Will in order mystically to die and resurge in its unity. And it enjoys absolute sovereignty as an essential property and right.

That concept of the State, enforced in human history, has forced democracies into intolerable self-contradictions, in domestic life and above all in international life. For this concept is no part of the authentic tenets of democracy, it does not belong to the real democratic inspiration and philosophy, it belongs to a spurious ideological heritage which preyed upon democracy like a parasite. During the reign of individualist or "liberal" democracy the State made into an absolute displayed a tendency to substitute itself for the people, and so to leave the people estranged from political life to a certain extent; it also was able to launch the wars between nations which disturbed the nineteenth century. Nevertheless after the Napoleonic era the worst implications of this process of State absolutization were restrained by the democratic philosophy and political practices which then prevailed. It is with the advent of the totalitarian regimes and philosophies that those worst implications were released. The State made into an absolute revealed its true face. Our epoch has had the privilege of contemplating the State totalitarianism of Race with German Nazism, of Nation with Italian Fascism, of Economic Community with Russian Communism.

The point which needs emphasis is this. For democracies today the most urgent endeavors are to develop social justice and improve world economic management, and to defend themselves against totalitarian threats from the outside and totalitarian expansion in the world; but the pursuit of these objectives will inevitably involve the risk of having too many functions of social life controlled by the State from above, and we shall be inevitably bound to accept this risk, as long as our notion of the State has not been restated on true and genuine democratic foundations, and as long as the body politic has not renewed its own structures and consciousness, so that the people become more really equipped for the exercise of freedom, and that the State be made an actual instrument of the common good of all. Then only will that very topmost agency, which is made by modern civilization more and more necessary to the human person in his political, social, moral, even intellectual and scientific progress, cease to be at the same time a threat to the freedoms of the human person as well as of intelligence and science. Then only will the highest functions of the State—to ensure the law and facilitate the free development of the body politic—be restored, and the sense of the State be regained by the citizens. Then only will the State achieve

its true dignity, which comes not from power and prestige, but from the exercise of justice.

At this point I should like not to be misunderstood. I hope that my previous remarks have made it sufficiently clear that I by no means condemn or depreciate the State and its astonishing growth in the course of modern history. That would be as blindly unreal and futile as to condemn or reject the mechanical achievements which have transformed the world, and which could and should become instruments for the liberation of man. From the last years of the nineteenth century on, state intervention has been needed to compensate for the general disregard for justice and human solidarity that prevailed during the early phases of the industrial revolution. State legislation with regard to employment and labor is in itself a requirement of the common good. And without the power of the State, the democratic state, how could a free body politic resist the pressure of the aggression of totalitarian states? The growth of the State, in modern centuries, as a rational or juridical machine and with regard to its inner constitutive system of law and power, its unity, its discipline; the growth of the State, in the present century, as a technical machine and with regard to its law-making, supervising and organizing functions in social and economic life, are in themselves part of normal progress.

Such progress has been entirely corrupted in totalitarian states. It remains normal progress, though subject to many risks, in democratic states, especially as regards the development of social justice.

We may dislike the State machinery; I do not like it. Yet many things we do not like are necessary, not only in fact, but by right. On the one hand the primary reason for which men, united in a political society, need the State, is the order of justice. On the other hand, social justice is the crucial need of modern societies. As a result, the primary duty of the modern State is the enforcement of social justice.

As a matter of fact, this primary duty is inevitably performed with abnormal emphasis on the power of the State to the very extent that the latter has to make up for the deficiencies of a society whose basic structures are not sufficiently up to the mark with regard to justice. Those deficiencies are the first cause of the trouble. And thus any theoretical objections or particular claims, even justified in their own particular spheres, will inevitably be considered as but minor things in the face of the vital necessity—moral as well as factual— of meeting the long neglected wants and rights of the human person in the deepest and largest strata of the human society.

The problem, in my opinion, is to distinguish the normal progress of the State from the false notions which prey upon it; and also to change the backward general conditions which, by imposing a too heavy burden upon it, make it liable to become seriously vitiated. So perhaps it will be possible, in a pluralistically organized body politic, to make the State into a topmost agency concerned only with the final supervision of the achievements of institutions born out of freedom, and whose free interplay expresses the vitality of a society integrally just in its basic structures.

To sum up, the common good of the body politic demands a network of authority and power in political society, and therefore a special agency endowed with uppermost power, for the sake of justice and law. The State is that uppermost political agency. But the State is neither a whole nor a subject of right, or a person. It is a part of the body politic, and, as such, inferior to the body politic as a whole, subordinate to it, and at the service of its common good. The common good of the political society is the final aim of the State, and comes before the immediate aim of the State, which is the maintenance of the public order. The State has a primary duty concerning justice, which should be exercised only in the manner of an ultimate supervision in a body politic basically just in its inner structures. Finally the body politic must control the State, which however contains the functions of government within its own fabric. At the point of the pyramid of all the particular structures of authority which in a democratic society should take form in the body politic from the bottom up, the State enjoys topmost supervising authority. But this supreme authority is received by the State from the body politic, that is, from the people; it is not a natural right to supreme power which the State possesses of itself. As follows from a critical elucidation of the concept of sovereignty, the conclusions of which I only have space for here, the supreme authority of the State should in no way be called sovereignty.

In the eyes of a sound political philosophy there is no sovereignty, that is, no natural and inalienable right to transcendent or separate supreme power in political society. Neither the prince nor the king nor the emperor were really sovereign, though they bore the sword and the attributes of sovereignty. Nor is the State sovereign; nor are even the people sovereign. God alone is sovereign.

We have discussed the Nation, the Body Politic, the State. Now what about the People?

I just said that the people are not sovereign in the genuine sense of this word. For in its genuine sense the notion of sovereignty relates to a power and independence which are supreme apart from and above the whole ruled by the sovereign. And obviously the power and independence of the people are not supreme apart from and above the people themselves. Of the people as well as of the body politic we have to say, not that they are sovereign, but that they have a natural right to full autonomy, or to self-government.

The people exercise this right when they establish the constitution, written or unwritten, of the body politic; or when, in a small political group they meet together to make a law or a decision; or when they elect their representatives. And this right remains always in them. It is by virtue of it that they control the State and their own administrative officials. It is by virtue of it that they cause to pass into those who are designated to take care of the common good, the right to make laws and to govern, so that, by investing those particular men with authority, within certain fixed limitations of duration and powers, the very exercise of the right of the people to self-government restricts to the same extent its further exercise, but does not make the possession of this right itself cease or lessen in any way. The administrative officials, or the Administration, that is, the human persons who are invested with executive power, are (in the strictest sense of the word "governing") the governing organ in the State, because the people have made them, in the body politic, the deputies for the very whole. All this is fully consistent with our conclusion that the most accurate expression concerning the democratic régime is not "sovereignty of the people." It is Lincoln's saying: "the government of the people, by the people, for the people." This means that the people are governed by men whom they themselves have chosen for functions of a determined nature and duration, and over whose management they maintain a regular control—first of all by means of their representatives and the assemblies thus constituted.

As concerns furthermore the very notion of the people, I would say that the modern concept of the people has a long history, and stems from a singular diversity of meanings which have fused together.[7] But considering only the political significance of the word, suffice it to say that the people are the multitude of human persons who, united under just laws, by mutual friendship, and for the common good of their human existence, constitute a political society or a body

[7] Cf. our book, *Raison et Raisons*, Chapter XI.

politic. The notion of body politic means the whole unit composed of the people. The notion of the people means the members organically united who compose the body politic. Thus what I have said concerning either Body Politic and Nation or Body Politic and State holds good about either People and Nation or People and State. Nay, more, since the people are human persons who not only form a body politic, but who have each one a spiritual soul and a supratemporal destiny, the concept of the people is the highest and noblest concept among the basic concepts that we are analyzing. The people are the very substance, the living and free substance of the body politic. The people are above the State, the people are not for the State, the State is for the people.

I should finally like to point out that the people have a special need of the State, precisely because the State is a particular agency specializing in the care of the whole, and thus has normally to defend and protect the people, their rights and the improvement of their lives against the selfishness and particularism of underprivileged groups or classes. In ancient France the people and the King relied upon each other, somewhat ambiguously, in their struggle against the supremacy of the great feudal lords or the nobility. In modern times it has been the same with the people and the State in regard to the struggle for social justice. Yet, as we have seen, this normal process, if it becomes corrupted by the absolutism of the totalitarian state, which raises itself to the supreme rule of good and evil, leads to the misfortune and enslavement of the people; and it is impaired and jeopardized if the people surrender themselves to a State, which, as good as it may be, has not been freed from the notion of its so-called sovereignty, as well as from the factual deficiencies of the body politic itself. In order both to maintain and make fruitful the movement for social improvement supported by the State and to bring the State back to its true nature, it is necessary that many functions now exercised by the State should be distributed among the various autonomous organs of a pluralistically structured body politic—either after a period of State capitalism or of State socialism, or, as is to be hoped, in the very process of the present evolution. It is also necessary that the people have the will, and the means, to assert their own control over the State.

FREEDOM IN SOVIET FICTION

Vera Alexandrova

HAVE YOU noticed," wrote Tolstoy in March 1872 to his friend, the literary critic Nicolaus Strakhov,

> Have you noticed that Russian art today shows two, apparently divergent currents which in reality are interlinked: the decline of artistic creativity in every sphere—music, painting, poetry—and the tendency to study Russian folk art? It seems to me that it is no longer a decline, that it is death already, but with the promise of rebirth in the people. One line of the creative curve reached its peak with Pushkin, dipped through Lermontov and Gogol down to us, poor sinners, and then sank to the bottom, while the other line moved toward an understanding of the people and will, with God's help, assist in the rebirth of Russian creativity . . .

It was with good reason that this quote from Tolstoy's letter was used in 1942 by his namesake, Alexey Tolstoy, in an essay entitled "A Quarter Century of Soviet Literature." Speaking historically and socially it is possible to view Soviet literature as a result of that reemergence from under the sea of which Tolstoy spoke. However, it occurred under such singular conditions that it could not be considered as free artistic development: from the first days of the Revolution the masters of Soviet policy had appointed "coast guards" to check everyone who rose to the surface, and make a wary selection from among those who reached shore. Many vanished from Soviet literature after their works had been declared out of tune with the Soviet era. Others rose, or rather were pushed, into the forefront of contemporary literature not for the literary quality of their writings but for the correct ideology of protagonists and authors.

A prime example of this latter type was Alexey Tolstoy himself. In the early days of the October Revolution he chose voluntary exile and made his way to France. He returned to the Soviet Union only after the end of the Civil War and, toward the end of his life (in 1945), became the most authoritative apologist for the Stalin regime. In his essay, therefore, he deliberately glosses over the achievements of the

first ten years of Soviet literature. According to him the output of those years mirrored the confusion of a period "when the country had not yet answered the question 'who would defeat whom' and when society was still in the throes of battle between Socialist and Capitalist elements." Tolstoy's interest in Soviet literature begins with industrialization and the growth of the prestige of the Soviet State.

In line with this viewpoint, a new textbook, *Contemporary Literature* by L. Timofeev (published in 1946 and approved by the Ministry as a textbook for the top grade in secondary schools), does not even mention the names of poets like Boris Pasternak, Nikolaus Kluyev, of writers like Eugene Zamyatin, Izaac Babel, Boris Pilnyak, Mikhail Zoshchenko, and many others. And yet, these men had inaugurated Soviet literature and their works, translated into foreign languages, had been the first to bring the literary message of the Russian Revolution to the outside world.

Before we can attempt to determine those values which survive in Soviet literature, we must answer a fundamental question: what is there in the literary works of those years that forces the leaders of present-day public opinion to "forget" the entire first decade of Soviet literature?

Poetry and prose in the twenties echoed the confused emotions which the October Revolution had aroused in the rank and file of the people. Not only Nazar Iliich Sinebryukhov, hero of Zoshchenko's first humorous novel, was spiritually unprepared for the revolutionary events. The young intellectual was even more unready. True, he was enchanted, almost hypnotized by the grandiose effort on behalf of human happiness and the dignity of humiliated millions; but he was embarrassed by the Bolshevik call for a "merciless hatred" of the foes of the Revolution as well as of those who still wavered. The slogan "Whoever is not with us—is against us!" meant to some poets the assassination of their poetry (Vladimir Mayakovsky preferred to take his own life), or "trampling words of beauty, like cigarette butts, into the dust," (Edouard Bagritzky) or to others, like Nicolaus Tikhonov, a challenge to seek self-vindication in romanticizing the Civil War (1921).

> . . . At table falsehood ate and drank with us,
> Bells tolled out of mere habit stupidly,
> Our coins lost weight and rang a thinner chime,
> And children looked on corpses without fear.
> Those were the days when first it was we learned
> Words bitter, beautiful and harsh.[1]

[1] *A Treasury of Russian Verse,* ed. Avrahm Yarmolinsky (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1949).

Young prose writers occasionally suffered even more in this crisis of the conscience. It was no slip of the tongue when Dmitri Furmanov, in his much publicized *Chapayev* (1925), says: "The old is no more—and the new is not yet. Where, then, can defenceless man rest his head?" And the author adds: "In those inhuman days, it was hard to be a man." And Konstantin Fedin, in his novel *Cities and Years* (1926), compares the human soul to a mongrel, "scraping vainly against tightly locked doors in the winter frost. The mongrel whimpers and blood drops ooze from lacerated paws . . ." The problem of the individual in the Revolution continues to run like a thread through Fedin's later writings, particularly in his last novel *An Unusual Summer* (1947-48).

This novel centers on the period of the Civil War (1919-20). Through his hero, a writer called Pastukhov, the author expresses in part his own thoughts. Pastukhov feels "sentenced to death" because, not being Red, he will be branded White. "But he is not White either and, hence, will be regarded as a Red." His soul revolts against this simplistic political arithmetic: "Surely the world is not divided only between Red and White? What if he, Pastukhov, were olive colored? Kill him! . . . But why don't olive colored, or the ultramarine, kill each other? Only the Whites and the Reds?" And in his own way Pastukhov attempts to fight for the freedom of creative art: The artist, he maintains, is distinguished from other men by his superior sensitivity. He reacts sharply to human suffering, and to him suffering is not an abstract term, but appears in the image of real men. In this novel Pastukhov assures the Communist Izvekov that he does not doubt the benevolent intentions or the good aims of the Revolution, but he is terrified by the knowledge that "in the battle for good, man must commit so much evil." And since Revolution is accompanied by the sufferings of great numbers of people, the artist is drawn to the sufferers.

Here is the true tragedy of the writer in Soviet Russia. The victorious regime not only denies the artist his right to pity the vanquished, but demands glorification of the victors and dismissal of the victims. Pastukhov, in the end, capitulates. This end of Pastukhov fits into the realities of Soviet life. But before we judge the author too harshly, let us remember that the capitulation of Pastukhov is the price paid to the regime for the chance to raise the issue of freedom. Fedin could never have gotten away with a Pastukhov who remained inflexible.

Here it may be fitting to mention an aspect in the technique of Soviet writing. The writer is severely limited in his choice of forms in

which to dramatize views frowned upon by official critics. The writer can make his "nonconforming citizen" capitulate, as in the case of Pastukhov, or of Professor Borodin, defending the freedom of science in the play *Terror,* by the late Afinogenov (1931). Or the writer can picture his nonconformist as "the enemy," connected with some international espionage ring. Or, finally, he can be presented as a "neurasthenic," an inferior personality who in the end puts a bullet through his head, as does the artist Arkhimedov in Benjamin Kaverin's *Artist Unknown* (1932). Luckily, the Soviet reader is in a somewhat better position than the writer: his heart, hidden from the censor's view, is free in its evaluations. And he can take these "endings" for what they are—a tribute to censorship.

Fedin's *Unusual Summer* is interesting from yet another viewpoint. Though written after the Second World War and conceived at its start, its action takes place in the beginning of the Revolutionary period and the Civil War. The urge to look back on the road they had travelled is characteristic not only of Fedin but of the entire older generation of Soviet writers. More significant, the problem in that past that concerns them most is the inner world of man. Take, for instance, Mikhail Zoshchenko's *Before Sunrise* (1943), laid in the years between 1912 and 1920. The work contains magnificent pictures of the 1914-1918 war—the atmosphere of defeat at the front, sketches of individual officers attempting to stem the tide of retreating men, the general confusion, the picture of revolutionary Petersburg glorious in its fierce integrity, and the chaos of the first years of the Revolution. The story remained unfinished, and Zoshchenko himself has since been "liquidated" because the *Bolshevik,* organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, accused the writer of a design to besmirch the youthful past of his contemporaries (No. 2, 1944). The real reason for this sharp attack is not far to seek: the present Soviet leaders do not like to be reminded of their defeatist policy during the First World War and the part they had played in the general chaos. More than that, they fear the memory of the people's spontaneous passion for rebuilding life on foundations of freedom and justice—a passion clearly discernible beneath today's chaos and clearly evident in Zoshchenko's story.

In all writings of Soviet literature concerned with the events of the twenties, this love of freedom, inherent in the first years of the Revolution, breaks through at every step. That is why today these writings must be "forgotten."

In an atmosphere of free speech, the fate of the personality in the Revolution would doubtless have become the central theme of Rus-

sian literature. But this freedom did not, and does not, exist in literature as in life. Soviet literature, therefore, often turns the problem of liberty upside down. Most writers of the entire pre-war period (1920-1941) berate the individual for the narrowness of his interests, his inherent egoism, and extol the wholesome collective with its desire to remake the world.

But there have always been some Soviet writers who sought to uphold the absolute value of the individual. The late Panteleymon Romanov (known in the United States for his novel *Three Pairs of Silk Stockings*) published in 1928 a short novel entitled *The Right to Life, or The Problem of the Non-Party Man.* The hero, non-party writer Leonid Ostankin, heartily favors the "new life"; but his non-partisanship is a source of constant irritation to the editor of the magazine in which he works. Seeking desperately to overcome this distrust, he begins writing what he does not feel. He acquires the correct ideology but the editor is dissatisfied again and reproaches him with having lost his touch. Ostankin twists and turns in his agony and becomes thoroughly dishonest, not only in his creative art but in his daily affairs; and when he finds himself acting meanly toward the woman he loves, Ostankin commits suicide, leaving a note to his "comrades of the pen." Made wiser by his bitter experience, he charges that, with shortsighted cowardice, they have abdicated their true individuality and he throws out this challenge to them:

> Remember that great historic moments submit man to a test. They sit in judgment and deal mercilessly with him who is dishonest. No matter if he lies in good faith, for humanitarian causes or in exaltation. Great times demand great truths.

Ostankin dies content, paying the price for the right to be himself.

Tragedy also veils the theme of the lonely individual in the short story, "Letters from Tula" (1918) by Boris Pasternak. This is almost a confession, written in the form of letters from a young poet to his beloved. In his travels, he stops in Tula where a movie company is shooting the film, *The Troubled Days.* He meets the actors and is shocked by their unabashed vulgarity. At night he wonders how he fits in with them—as man and artist. He does, after all, belong to their "craft," and he attempts to discover the reason for the turmoil in his soul at the sight of such relatively insignificant misbehavior. Suddenly he realizes that he was being particularly sensitive because he was somewhere near Tula, where Tolstoy had lived and died. (Leo Tolstoy's estate "Yassnaya Polyana" and the station Astapovo, where he died, are situated in the district). Here, on this "ground of con-

science," the poet is strongly alive once more to the precepts of the great teacher, and he despairs that life has turned so base, that there no longer are moments when man could "warm his heart at the burning torch of shame." That night, thinking of his art, the poet swears to remain alone rather than betray his conscience.

Pasternak was surely not aware at the time how these thoughts would illumine, if only for a second, his entire future role in Soviet poetry. His genuine lyrical and philosophical gifts soon met with strong opposition from official critics who accused him of "aristocratism" and "individualism." His creative periods were broken frequently with spells of enforced silence. Yet, despite the pressure and more than any Soviet poet, Pasternak contrived to retain his creative personality.

In the preface of his translation of Shakespeare (1943), the poet offers a picture of the English dramatist in which the reader can easily detect Pasternak himself.

> Shakespeare will always be a favorite of generations which are historically mature and have endured much . . . Experience teaches a man to respect the voice of evidence, faithful perception, the rich, unsmiling art of realism . . . You can sense this not only in the originality of every one of Shakespeare's poems and plays. Whenever he speaks of good and evil, of truth and falsehood, we perceive a personality inconceivable in an atmosphere of servility and fawning. We hear the voice of genius, a king among kings, a judge over Gods, the voice of future Western democracies whose foundations are the dignity of the toiler and the fighter.

In conclusion the poet expresses his happiness over the fact that his country and Shakespeare's are united in a common struggle against the terrible foe. Small wonder that during the purge of Soviet literature (1946 and since), conducted under the slogan of the fight against "slavishness toward the West," Pasternak fell as one of its first victims.

No account of the manner in which Soviet writers handle the problem of the individual's right to freedom is complete without at least a passing mention of the writers' association, "Pereval," founded in 1924 and continuing, with forced interruptions, through 1936. Pereval was organized by Alexander Voronsky, famous Soviet literary critic and editor of the first Soviet literary review, *Krassnaya Nov.* Within a short time of its founding, Pereval became the center for a great many young writers, Communists and non-Party men alike, who found other organizations too confining, too strictly supervised by Party officials. In its statement of objectives, Pereval declared it would fight for "honesty, humanism, and the right to adjudge the

world." That was sufficient for the organization to come under attack from the very first. Voronsky himself was exiled at the end of the twenties, then permitted to return, only to be rearrested in 1936 as a "pernicious enemy of the people." He has not been heard of since. About that time many other well known writers, all members of Pereval, were arrested. Among them Ivan Katayev and Nicholay Zarudin were liquidated for collecting money from friends to aid colleagues who had preceded them into exile.

In summing up the evolution of Soviet literature prior to the Second World War, one fact stands out. The values considered "lasting" in pre-Revolutionary Russian literature and which had placed it high in the world's esteem—liberty, the dignity of man, humanism, and a deep sense of social justice—were put on the defensive by Soviet writers.

Every great war necessarily deflects the course of development in most spheres of human endeavor. The break was strongly evident in the very first literary reactions to the Soviet Union's involvement in war. In place of the standardized Communist, the hero now was of the rank and file of the people—such as Leonid Leonov's play *Invasion* (1942), Alexey Tolstoy's *Tales of Ivan Sudarev* (1942), Konstantin Simonov's play *Russian Men* (1942) and others. Even the language changed. Concepts long since relegated to the files of history reappeared—words like mercy, human being, compassion. The adjective "Russian" bluntly displaced the former "Soviet."

This break with the prewar literary line was the more obvious, since Soviet critics had been proclaiming over the years that new men had emerged since the Revolution, men who lived by novel, previously unknown laws of "Soviet morality." The fiery tongue of war obliterated all this in the first weeks and months of the retreat and, as in ancient palimpsests, the tracings of an older original appeared beneath the new texts.

Konstantin Simonov, notorious outside Russia for his recent violent anti-American plays, remembering this first period of the war, wrote in his "Open Letter to the Critic Semyon Tregub" (1947):

> The tremendous experience of grief and misfortune cleansed many souls . . . During those first two years, poetry flourished at the front. The poet's eyes were opened. War had shaken them, had awakened in their souls deeper, stronger and more sincere responses than those they had presented, one might say, as their *emotional passports* before the war. (My italics.)

But there was something else in war literature that is even more indicative than new themes and new forms of expression. While the

retreat of the Red Army and enemy occupation of a large part of the country caused understandable confusion among writers, the return to forgotten concepts seemed to fill them with unconcealed joy. And this joy shone through even the most tragic descriptions of retreat, evacuation, and the suffering of untold thousands. It was as if their spirits had been liberated.

Alas, this joy did not last long. As soon as the situation at the front changed definitely in favor of Russia—in 1943—Soviet literature, in the second period of the war, was forced to a revaluation of its prewar heroes, and with them of the accustomed Soviet concepts and words. And yet, the war did not pass without marking the generation that lived through it. Despite tightened controls and constant "purges" among writers for "remnants of enemy ideologies," this change can be seen in the handling of most problems. Take, once more as an example, the relationship between the individual and society, the Bolshevik collective. Society now, as in prewar literature, stands in contrast to the individual, with one difference. Before the war "society" was depicted as an immediate, physical reality: plants, factories, the Kolkhoz. Since the war "society" has come to mean "the state." The State's interests tower above all else. The very thought of possible limitations to the power of the state over the individual is a crime. But within the officially prescribed scheme the reader constantly encounters deviations.

The hero of Konstantin Simonov's *Smoke of the Fatherland* (1947), the Communist Bassargin, returns home after a two-year mission in the United States. When he changes trains at the border, and settles in a Soviet compartment, he is, of course, delighted with the landscape he passes. The word "we," used frequently in conversation, gives him particular pleasure. Everything is "we" to the people—the train itself, speeding across a scorched countryside, the squalid huts thrown together from burned-out logs, the old conductor and even the youngster who is riding the rods and is shivering with cold and hunger. "The fellow in rags is 'us' too. He is a symbol of our crying and never-satisfied poverty of the postwar years." Against this collective "we" Bassargin puts the millions of lonely "I's" of the United States—a contrast which, to him, appears as the most characteristic feature of the capitalist world.

But then Bassargin comes home and settles in the house of his brother-in-law, engineer and builder Kondrashev. From the first conversation Bassargin comes to dislike Kondrashev who plies him with questions about life in the U.S.A. and who admits frankly that he distrusts the information supplied in the Soviet press. He is fascinated by

the technical perfection of the gift Bassargin brought him, even though it is only an electric razor. Noting Bassargin's disapproval, Kondrashev says:

> You probably take me for a savage. You say to yourself: put an electric razor in his hands and he thinks that's culture. Well, if you like, that's exactly what it is. Culture reveals itself in trifles. Yes, trifles are the hallmark of a civilization.

The difference between the two men finally converges on two major problems: war and the standards of human behavior. Kondrashev is strongly opposed to a new war. When Bassargin contends that a clash might be inevitable in a world harboring "two systems" Kondrashev counters sharply: "There have been all kinds of systems in the world, and people managed to live, adapt themselves, and reach agreements."

They are equally irreconcilable in their evaluation of human behavior. Kondrashev is an energetic engineer who, since the libération of his area, has managed to build no less than two thousand houses. But he combines his intense activity and devotion with concern for his personal interests and he does not bother keeping it from either Bassargin or his Communist superiors. For Bassargin, on the one hand, the ideal behavior of Soviet man is epitomized in the worker Vassily, hero of the film *Lenin in October 1918*. Vassily was sent to the country to requisition food for starving Moscow and he returns with several carloads of bread. But, as he reports on his mission to Lenin, he faints with hunger. During the entire period he had continued taking for himself only the minimum ration of a quarter of a pound of bread. Bassargin mentions this scene to Kondrashev and is about to expand on it, when he stops abruptly. Kondrashev's face is "distorted with disdain for all these high-sounding phrases."

The most amazing thing about this novel, which official critics did not fail to condemn as faulty in ideology, consists in the fact that, despite their sharp opposition to Kondrashev, both Bassargin and the author unwillingly, but clearly, sympathize with him, and with this sympathy they infect the readers and even some of the critics. The critic, Ryabov, for instance, wrote in an article "Men of the Forties" (1948): "The engineer Kondrashev is called all sorts of names—a babbitt, a degenerate, and even an enemy. Yet the reader will find it difficult to understand why the author, as well as the apparently respectable heroes of the story, should have held the engineer in such disgrace." Even though Simonov's novel was considered "faulty," yet the "dissident citizen"—who not only refuses to conceal his disagreement with official views, but who expresses and defends his opinions —has made frequent appearances in post-war Soviet literature.

In a recently published novel by Vladimir Debrovolsky, *Genia Masslova* (1950), such a "dissident citizen" is Professor Yakhontov. This professor is contrasted with the "correct" Soviet scientist Derevianko. The two men have known each other since the twenties. In his youth Derevianko had been of one mind with Yakhontov: he had valued science above all else. But later he became a member of the Communist Party and changed his viewpoint. Now he believes that science must, first of all, apply itself to practical tasks and that it is valuable only in so far as it can be "utilized" for state needs. The violent clash between the two professors occurs during a debate on the dissertation of a young post-graduate student. Here Yakhontov says to Derevianko:

> I remember your youth as clearly as you do mine . . . Like Gorki's hero, Danko, you were prepared to tear out your own heart to illumine the people's path through the darkness of swamps and marshes . . . But you prudently learned that the electric lamp has been invented, that paved roads and steel bridges exist and that, therefore, one might bypass the swamps and leave the burning heart in peace. And thus, calmly, you have passed from great tasks to odd jobs, from science to trade, from passion to tepid ardor, from a future beyond the clouds to the daily crust of bread. You have turned from scientist to politician. Go ahead, if that is your calling. But permit your neighbor to reach for the stars he dreams of. Give him the right to breathe and to err. Yes, even to err!

To this heated retort Derevianko replies sarcastically that Yakhontov's erring had cost the state "hundreds of thousands of rubles." But he feels that he has convinced no one and adds a more threatening argument in accusing Yakhontov of "idealism."

"That word does not scorch me," says Yakhontov, turning pale, "uttered as it is by a cold and calculating man."

Thirty-odd years ago, when the revolutionary storm broke, the soul of the individual lost its moorings and prepared to dissolve itself in the collective. These thirty years were illumined retrospectively by the flash of a great war, whose victory was won primarily by individual courage and readiness for sacrifice. Once more the Soviet citizen discovered that personal freedom is not a transient, but a lasting value. From this discovery the new Soviet dissenter draws strength for his lone conflict with the state.

By permission of Clarence Ward

THE FIRST GOTHIC CHOIR

The Ambulatory and Chapels of St. Denis

THE BIRTH OF THE GOTHIC

Otto G. von Simson

Admirers of medieval civilization, unlike those of classical antiquity or the Renaissance, face a curious problem. Their admiration is not the result of an experience of affinity. The most characteristic aspect of medieval civilization is its universalism. This term refers to two related manifestations of the same phenomenon: the close interaction and integration of all the varied concerns of the medieval mind, and the relevance of this intellectual cosmos to all nations within the Christian orbit, to all strata of society, and to nearly all individuals. If these two aspects of medieval universalism are justly objects of our admiration, they are also in a peculiar sense foreign to our own outlook. In the Middle Ages, science and faith, theology and politics, philosophy and art appeared as different approaches to the same reality, as different facets of the same prism; they were intelligible only as parts of a greater whole. In our own time, these disciplines have emancipated themselves; their essence, purpose, and function are inseparable from their autonomy. Science and art, politics and philosophy, as we understand them, are children of this emancipation. The artist as well as the scientist will demand for his work a special approach that is untrammeled by other experiences of any kind; religion and theology on the one hand, and politics and ethics on the other have all divorced themselves from a common reality and claim different and often conflicting spheres of allegiance.

It is much easier to lament the loss of this unity than to deny that our vision has become adapted to modern differentiation; it is even more difficult for us to regret that this is so. Not only is it a truism for us that science is not theology and politics not ethics; when we look at the Middle Ages it will often seem to us as if the very affinity of the facets of the intellectual prism is something that adulterates the purity of each one of them. Does not St. Thomas Aquinas remain a theologian even when he sets out to be a philosopher? Is not the medieval scientist a poet, and the medieval poet a philosopher? And is it not by virtue of these uncertain frontiers that each one of them falls short of what, in our judgment, is or ought to be his real achievement and

concern? Dante's *Divine Comedy* was not meant to be fiction, as all modern poetry is. Even today it is understood to be much more than that: a compendium and synthesis of the entire physical and metaphysical knowledge of the age, an unparalleled effort at integration. Our admiration cannot blind us to the fact that if Dante has used all disciplines as bricks for his great edifice, they have not been fitted together without violence. Distortions become apparent when they are considered separately. Divorced from Dante's political views, his eschatology does not make sense. His physics is childish, his poetry often impure. The long discourse on the structure of the moon in Canto II of *Paradiso* is poor physics and poor poetry. But the poet did not mean his physics and poetry to be considered independently. They are essential parts of a universal structure and have to be viewed within this greater pattern.

Our age has sacrificed the One to the many; the Middle Ages sacrificed the many to the One. Any attempt to grasp the essence of medieval civilization must be an exercise in perspective; we must study the process of integration, the effort of compression, often the necessity of distortion by which a particular insight or experience is made part of the whole. This is the purpose of the present inquiry. My subject is the origin of the Gothic Cathedral. It is here viewed as an expression of medieval universalism which, in one important aspect at least, surpasses even the achievement of Dante. The cathedral is not the creation of one lonely genius working in seclusion, but rather the greatest and most sustained collective enterprise of the Middle Ages. If it appears to us as the image of the spiritual movements that shaped the epoch, it is also marked, as no other work of art is, by the contingencies of the economic and political forces of that epoch. And whereas the medieval poets and thinkers were satisfied to realize their idea of universal truth in the abstract realm of thought, the Gothic cathedral, as we shall see, is intimately connected with political power in its attempt to realize the universal idea within the social fabric.

Unlike other architectural styles, the Gothic did not arise gradually from the declining remains of a predecessor. It emerged suddenly at a time when the Romanesque style was still youthful and vigorous, and at a definite historical moment. More remarkable still, Gothic architecture is the product of a single region having definite geographical boundaries and a clearly defined political unity. This territory, the Ile de France and its adjoining districts, was the heart of the Capetian monarchy. Single elements of Gothic developed elsewhere, notably in Normandy; but if a work of art is more than the sum of

its parts, then the Gothic cathedral belongs to the French Crownland only. The great churches that come to mind when we think of the first flowering of the Gothic—St. Denis and Chartres, Noyon and Sens, Paris and Reims—all rose within the orbit of Capetian power and during a decisive phase of its cultural and political development. The artistic centers of the Gothic age, moreover, were precisely those which also exerted a decisive influence upon the intellectual formation of the High Middle Ages. Between 1140 and 1240 there were three centers of Gothic art—of sculpture and the art of the stained glass window as well as of architecture: St. Denis, Chartres, and Paris. Their role in the development of medieval thought and civilization is equal to their artistic importance.

An intimate connection between the speculative thought and the architecture developed in these centers is suggested by the fact that both sprang, as it were, from the same minds. Until the thirteenth century, the higher learning was exclusively a clerical privilege. Only the members of the cathedral chapters and monastic institutions possessed the technical and theoretical knowledge necessary for the design and execution of the great churches. Abbot Suger of St. Denis was in a very real sense the architect of the first Gothic church; but he also was head of a monastery that preserved an intellectual legacy of unexcelled significance for the thought of medieval France. Suger's case is not unique. It inevitably raises the question whether we cannot establish a connection between the thought cultivated in the great ecclesiastical centers of learning, and the vision of the new architectural style that emerged simultaneously in the French Crownland.

Let us begin by looking at Gothic architecture itself. Its decisive feature is not the cross-ribbed vault, the pointed arch, or the flying buttress. All these are constructive means but not artistic ends. Even the soaring verticalism is not its most important aspect. What is without precedent or parallel is the use of light, and more precisely, the relation of light to the material substance of the walls. In a Romanesque church light is something distinct from and contrasting with the heavy, somber, tactile substance of the walls. But light seems to filter through the Gothic wall, permeating it, merging with it, transfiguring it. Not that Gothic interiors are particulary bright; in fact the stained glass windows which adorn them were so inadequate as sources of light that a subsequent and blinder age replaced many of them by *grisaille* or white windows, which today convey an entirely misleading impression. In the Gothic cathedral the stained glass windows

replace the brightly colored walls of Romanesque architecture. Structurally and aesthetically these windows are transparent walls. As Gothic verticalism seems to reverse the movement of gravity, replacing its law with its very opposite, so, by a similar aesthetic paradox, the stained glass window seemingly denies the impenetrable nature of matter. It receives its visual existence from an energy which transcends it. Light, which is ordinarily broken or concealed by matter, appears as the active principle, while matter is real only inasmuch as it partakes of the luminous quality of light. We shall see presently how closely impressions such as these come to the philosophical speculations of the Middle Ages about the nature of light.

The Gothic, then, is primarily transparent, diaphanous architecture.[1] During the first century after its emergence, this aesthetic principle was developed with complete consistency and to its ultimate consequences. The gradual enlargement of the windows proper is not the most important aspect of this process. No segment of the inner space was allowed to remain in darkness. The side aisles, the galleries above them, the ambulatory and chapels of the choir became narrower and shallower, their exterior walls pierced by continuous rows of windows. Ultimately they became a shallow, transparent shell surrounding nave and choir and flooding them with light.

This aspect of Gothic, paradoxical like its "weightless" verticality, the single-mindedness with which it is gradually brought to full realization, are sufficient to disprove the older view which saw in this style nothing but the triumph of functionalism, of technical competence. Of course, every architect has to translate his vision into structural terms; but no other style has more successfully sought to conceal the static and mechanical considerations to which architecture is subject, none distinguishes more clearly between the aesthetic effect and the structural means employed for its realization (the frail and graceful system of supports in the nave is made possible by the huge flying buttresses which remain invisible from the inside). No other style, finally, defies structural laws more obviously and more daringly for the sake of a vision which transcends them. Some early churches still bear witness to the fact that the Gothic design preceded the means of its technical realization. We would not be far from the truth in defining Gothic architecture as the subordination of structure to vision.

[1] The term "diaphanous" was first applied to Gothic architecture by H. Jantzen ("Uber den gotischen Kirchenraum," *Freiburger Wissensch. Gesellsch.*, Heft 15, 1928) though his interpretation is somewhat different from mine. For an interesting historical confirmation of this analysis, cf. the use of the adjectives *durchliuhtic, cler,* etc, as attributes of beauty in medieval literature: G. Weise, *Die Geistige Welt der Gotik* (Halle, 1939), pp. 447 ff, 477 ff.

It is easier to explain this aspect of the Gothic cathedral if we recall a sociological fact which has particularly impressed modern architects. Until the mid-twelfth century the professional architect, in our sense of the term, was unknown. Where the word architect is used in the Middle Ages it denotes either the patron or the craftsman. This means that between these two there did not stand, as he stands today, the man competent to handle the structural problems of the building and responsible for its artistic design within the limits imposed by the wishes of his patron and the skill of his masons. The first professional architects of the Middle Ages were indeed builders of Gothic cathedrals, but the Gothic style was not their invention. Only after it was born do they appear on the scene. One may even ask if the architectural profession is not the consequence of a style which posed structural problems requiring the experience of a master and the specialized training that one generation must pass on to the next. However that may be, the Gothic cathedral originated at a time when not the professional architect but the bishop or abbot determined the design of his church. These ecclesiastical builders were not primarily moved by structural considerations. Before their eyes stood the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, the celestial city of the elect, which the liturgical texts invoked and of which the sanctuary is, in the mystical thought of the Church, the image. Between this vision and the laws of construction exists a relationship as paradoxical as that between the transparency and verticalism of the Gothic on the one hand and the laws and properties of matter on the other. Realization of this grandiose paradox imposed structural problems which often proved insuperable to the medieval builders, as the collapse of many of their projects attests; but it is as the expression of that particular theme that Gothic architecture must be understood. This fact compels us to look upon the spirituality, the metaphysical thought, and the liturgical experience of the High Middle Ages as sources of the Gothic style.

We can prove this influence in one instance that is of capital importance: the abbey church of St. Denis. The choir of this edifice was completed shortly before the middle of the twelfth century. Commensurate with the unique prestige of the monastery, of which more will be said later, the choir was an architectural masterpiece, which, for contemporaries no less than for posterity, marked an epoch. There is general agreement today that if any one church may be called the mother of Gothic cathedrals, it must be St. Denis. This fact alone imparts special significance to the story of its construction. Fortu-

nately, the man who may justly lay claim to the honor of being the architect of the Gothic St. Denis has informed us in two treatises about the circumstances of its construction and the ideas which inspired it.[2]

This man is Abbot Suger. He makes it plain in his writings that, next to Divine Providence, he considered himself and only himself the author of the new church. We must look to him for an answer to our question as to the origin and meaning of the new architecture.

Two aspects of Suger's description of his church are noteworthy. First, the aesthetic quality of his architectural design, which he considered essential and to which he calls our attention, is the same that we have found to be the decisive feature of Gothic. Secondly, the Abbot used his description of St. Denis as an illustration of his theology. This fact is as surprising as it is significant. But before exploring it, we must turn to the aesthetic views which Suger expressed in his writings.

In his description of St. Denis, Suger ascribed an aesthetic dignity of singular pre-eminence to light and to the luminous. The most beautiful expression of this view occurs in the dedicatory inscription for the choir (see frontispiece). For the technical accomplishment, Suger has no word. For him as well as for his contemporaries, structural problems were disheartening obstacles or occasions for miraculous intervention from above. Their practical solution was not yet an object of admiration, as it was to be in the Renaissance. Suger calls our attention to his new choir only in order to help us understand the mystical vision which his architecture unfolds before us; and this vision is a vision of light. In the inscription mentioned, Suger anticipates the time—he did not live to see it—when to the Gothic choir will be added a Gothic nave. Then, he says, the church shines with its middle part brightened, for bright is that which is brightly coupled with the light, and bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new Light.

Plainly, for Suger as well as for us, Gothic architecture is an architecture luminously transparent; it is matter transfigured by light. The dignity which Suger attributed to the luminous also appears in his remarks about the gilt doors, the golden crucifix, the golden, bejewelled decoration of the main altar. The reason for this taste appears in the inscription which the Abbot placed above the gilded

[2] Suger's writings on art are now available to the English reader: *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of Saint Denis and Its Art Treasures.* Edited, translated, and annotated by Erwin Panofsky (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1946). I have usually followed this excellent translation in the present essay.

doors. Here we are admonished not to stop at the contemplation of the work of art but rather to use its resplendent beauty as a means for illuminating our inner eye. The sight of what appears as light or luminous to our senses is to lead us to the vision of the true Light—Christ. As Suger puts it, the dull mind requires material objects in order to rise to the truth; the vision of sensuous light enables us to ascend from our submersion in the world of matter.

Suger, then (like Plato), conceived of sensuous beauty as partaking of transcendental beauty; for both, the function of the beautiful is "anagogical"—the beauty of material things is but the first step of the ladder that will eventually lead the soul to the contemplation of God. The Abbot of St. Denis, moreover, understood God as light. Hence it is in luminous objects that he perceived most clearly the transcendental source as well as the anagogical purpose of all sensuous beauty. Suger wanted us to understand that his gilded church doors are the entrance to the Divine Light mysteriously present in the sanctuary and reflected in the brightness of his Gothic choir.

The tendency to identify light and the luminous with the beautiful connects Suger with the greatest medieval thinkers. For Hugh of St. Victor, Robert Grosseteste, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, light was the source of all visual beauty. The stars, gold, and precious stones are beautiful by virtue of their luminous quality. These views are reflected in the decorative arts of the age and in innumerable literary references, which attest medieval man's delight in glittering objects and shining surfaces. The influence of this aesthetic of light upon Gothic architecture is certain. No other style could have satisfied this taste. Architectural descriptions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries time and again praise the brightness of the new churches, the more luminous structure, *structuram clariorem,* of the cathedral of Auxerre or, in the case of St. Denis, the substitution of a resplendent church for a darker one, a fact specifically mentioned in Brother William's biography of Suger.

These medieval impressions coincide with our own estimate of Gothic architecture; typically medieval, however, is the integration of such aesthetic views into a comprehensive philosophical system. The medieval experience and philosophy of beauty are not exclusively or even primarily based on sense impressions. It is even doubtful if we may speak of medieval aesthetics, if this term is defined as the autonomous philosophy of beauty. To the medieval thinker, beauty was not a value independent of others, but rather the radiance of truth, the splendor of perfection, and the quality of things which reflects their origin in God. It is particularly the identification of beauty

with light which connects the aesthetic with the metaphysical views of the Middle Ages.

Light, according to this view, is the most noble of natural phenomena, the form which all things have in common, the principle which comprehends and maintains the universe. Among created things, light is the least material, the closest approximation to pure form. For a thinker like Grosseteste, it is actually the mediator between bodily and bodiless substances, a spiritual body, an embodied spirit, as he calls it. Light, moreover, is the creative principle in all things, most active in the heavenly spheres whence it causes all organic growth here on earth, and weakest in the earthly substances. But it is present even in them, for, asks St. Bonaventure, do not metals and precious stones begin to shine when we polish them, are not clear window panes manufactured from sand and ashes, is not fire struck from black coal, and is not this luminous quality of things evidence of the existence of light in them? According to the medieval thinkers, light is the principle of order and value. The objective value of a thing is determined by the degree to which it partakes of light. And in experiencing delight at the sight of luminous objects, we grasp intuitively their ontological dignity within the hierarchy of beings. The reader will find in Dante's *Paradiso* the greatest poetical exposition of medieval light metaphysics. The poem might be described as a great fugue on the single theme, *la luce divina e penetrante per l'universo secondo ch'e degno* (31:22 ff.), "the divine light penetrates the universe according to its dignity."

Such views embody a very ancient, half-mythical experience of light. Their philosophical articulation originates with Plato. In the sixth book of the *Republic,* the good is defined as the cause of knowledge as well as of being and essence, and then compared to sunlight, which is "not only the author of visibility in all visible things but generation and nourishment and growth."

In this passage sunlight is perhaps no more than a metaphor; but Plato's followers gave it a very different meaning. For the neo-Platonists, this brief sentence was the seed out of which they developed an entire epistemological and metaphysical system. Light was now conceived as the transcendental reality which engenders the universe and illuminates our intellect for the perception of truth.

These ideas were adopted by Christianity. St. Augustine developed the notion that intellectual perception results from an act of illumination in which divine grace enlightens the human mind. The father of a Christian philosophy in which light is the first principle of metaphysics as well as of epistemology is an Eastern mysti_ the so-called

Pseudo-Areopagite, of whose identity and strange after-life in medieval France more will be said later. This thinker blends neo-Platonic philosophy with the magnificent theology of light in the Gospel of St. John, where the divine *Logos* is conceived as the true Light which shineth in darkness, by which all things were made, and which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. Upon this passage the Pseudo-Areopagite bases the edifice of his own thought. Creation is to him an act of illumination, but even the created universe could not exist without light. If light ceased to shine, all being would vanish into nothingness. From this metaphysical concept of light, the Pseudo-Areopagite also deduced his epistemology. The creation is the self-revelation of God. All creatures are "lights" which by their existence bear testimony to the Divine Light and thereby enable the human intellect to perceive it.

It is a strange world view indeed which stemmed from these ideas. All created things are "theophanies," manifestations of God. How is this possible when God is transcendental to His creation? Are His creatures not too imperfect to be images of Him? The Pseudo-Areopagite answered this question by pointing to the frailty of our intellect, which is incapable of perceiving God face to face. Therefore, God interposes images between Him and us. Holy Writ as well as nature are such "screens"; they present us with images of God, designed to be imperfect, distorted, even contradictory. This imperfection and mutual contradiction, apparent even to our minds, is to kindle in us the desire to ascend from a world of mere shadows and images to the contemplation of the Divine Light itself. Thus it is, paradoxically enough, by evading us that God becomes gradually manifest; He conceals Himself before us in order to be revealed.

The ideas briefly outlined above are the source of the light metaphysics of the High Middle Ages, and they help us to see the light with the eyes of Suger and his contemporaries: as an image of the Divine Light, an expression of eternal reality of which all creation partakes, as the link between matter and spirit, and as the noblest revelation of God among all created things.

It is not easy for us to relive such an experience. We are at first tempted to understand it in either a pantheistic or a purely metaphorical sense. The reader of the preceding pages may have asked himself whether it is the physical light to which the Pseudo-Areopagite and his medieval followers refer, or a transcendental light to which the qualities of physical light are assigned in an allegorical sense only. But it is precisely this distinction that we must discard if we seek to

understand medieval thought. Augustine was the first, I think, to stress the fact that when the Scripture refers to Christ as Light, this is no mere metaphor as is, say, the Lamb, but actually a definition of His nature. Nor is this theological concept of light altogether transcendental. For if nature is understood as a manifestation of God—and it was so understood by the Pseudo-Areopagite and the Christian Platonists of the twelfth century—then the distinction between the reality of nature (as defined by modern science) and nature's theological significance has disappeared.

A modern scientist may be a devout Christian, but as a scientist he is exclusively concerned with the physical nature of the phenomena he describes and explains. For him, this physical nature has nothing to do with theology. For the medieval thinker, on the other hand, such a distinction would have been inadmissible. According to him, we properly understand a thing only if we perceive God in it. Take as an example the sunlight filtering through the windows of a Gothic cathedral. For us, this light is either a physical phenomenon to be explained in terms of physics or an aesthetic one; its interpretation as a manifestation of God seems impossible for the modern Christian except in a purely allegorical sense. For medieval man, on the other hand, this interpretation was the only one that grasped the nature of light and was equally valid for the cosmological and the aesthetic approach, sanctioned by theology, and inspired by the Christian cult.

Christian theology is centered in the mystery of the Incarnation. St. John had perceived it as light illuminating the world. So, in the darkness of the northern winter, did medieval man. The liturgy of the Church lent reality to this image by celebrating Christmas, the festival of the Incarnation, at the time of the winter solstice, and by investing the lights used during the divine service with a special symbolic dignity. At some unknown date, certainly before the end of the thirteenth century, the opening passage from the Gospel of John began to be read at the close of every Mass. It must have conveyed to those who listened a vision of the Eucharistic mystery as divine light shining in darkness. In the light illuminating the Gothic choir, this divine reality appeared to be mysteriously present. It was as an expression of this experience that Jan Van Eyck, at a later date, close to the end of the Middle Ages, depicted the Incarnation as taking place in a church, with the Holy Ghost descending upon Mary as a ray of light piercing the church window.

The meaning of light to medieval man, as I have briefly outlined it, explains Abbot Suger's use of luminous materials as particularly attuned to the function of sacred art. It explains no less the origin of

Gothic architecture. The Christian Church is an image of the Celestial City, and for centuries Christian architecture had drawn its inspiration from the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation. In chapter 21, verse 11, St. John speaks of the light of the Celestial City as being "like to a precious stone, even as crystal." In the Gothic cathedral this aspect of the eschatalogical vision seems to be represented to the exclusion of all others. In the famous poetical description of the sanctuary of the Holy Grail that occurs in the thirteenth century epic, *The Younger Titurel*, are reflected the sentiments which the luminosity of the Gothic interiors imparted to contemporaries.

Gothic architecture, however, is not merely a symbol of the light that shineth in darkness. The medieval theologian sought to perceive the ultimate reality beyond matter by contemplating the light falling through the transparent walls of the church; the medieval artist, by transforming his materials into diaphanous or luminous works of art, sought to reveal their ontological dignity. In this sense, the Gothic cathedral is the realization of the Christian cosmos. Light is here experienced as the divine principle which informs all knowledge and all creation. To understand the meaning of the cathedral more fully, let us turn again to Suger.

The Abbot of St. Denis dealt with his new church in two separate works. Nearly half of the account of his administration is devoted to the new Abbey and its ornaments. In this treatise, from which I have already quoted, Suger directs our attention to the anagogical function of his art, to the reflection of a world beyond in the imagery and architecture created by human hands. Another and earlier work of Suger's is entirely devoted to the new church: the *Booklet on the Consecration of the Church of St. Denis.* Both works are intimately related. The later one, describing the completed church, develops Suger's aesthetics. The *Booklet on the Consecration* recounts the building of the church; but it deals far less with the manual and technical aspects of the undertaking than with the spiritual process leading from the germinal idea to the completed structure. This meaning of the treatise invests it with singular significance for our understanding of the origins of the Gothic.

The *Booklet* begins by praising the admirable power with which a singular and supreme reason reconciles and harmonizes the disparity of things human and things divine, joining together by the graceful concordance of a superior harmony that which, through the inferiority of origin and the disparity of natures, seems bound to be

mutually conflicting. Those, it continues, who strive to be glorified by partaking of that supreme and eternal reason, will forever seek to reconcile the similar with the dissimilar. With the aid of charity they fetch from the source of eternal reason the means which remedy the internal war and sedition; they prefer the works of the spirit to those of the flesh, rejecting the anxiety and oppression of sensuality in order to fix all of their attention on the hope of eternal reward. Wrapped in the vision of other realities, they forget carnal desires; and they rejoice that, through the merit of a glorious consciousness, they will one day be united to supreme reason and eternal beatitude.

These thoughts about the One which transcends and reconciles the many, about the contemplation of truth which must rise above the uncertainty and deceitfulness of the material world, about the divine harmony in which the apparent strife and discord of creation are dissolved—such thoughts reflect the influence of Christian Platonism with its mystical speculations about a cosmic harmony and its image in man's soul. But what is the relation of these thoughts to Suger's account of the building and consecration of his new church in subsequent chapters, to his views on sacred art, which he expounded here and in his second treatise? No satisfactory answer to this question has been offered so far; Professor Panofsky calls the opening passage "an organ prelude filling the room with magnificent sound before the appearance of a discernible theme." But it would seem more logical to assume the opposite, that Suger, at the very opening of his narrative, is describing the mental disposition with which the great architectural enterprise was undertaken, the spiritual vision of which his Gothic sanctuary is the realization.[3]

I am supported in this belief by Dom Jean Leclercq, the Benedictine scholar, who has recently translated Suger's *De Consecratione* into French. Referring to the mystical introduction of the treatise, Leclercq, in his preface, points to the interpenetration and synthesis of contemplation and action in the ascetic ideal of his order. The monk's ascetic life aims at his sanctification. His daily work in service of this ideal may be described as "edification." Dom Leclercq recalls the ancient architectural overtones which are present even today in this term; he suggests that the Benedictine concept of labor

[3] In the introduction to Suger's writings, Professor Panofsky has, I think too exclusively stressed their apologetic purpose as a defense of Suger's passion for art against the more austere view represented by Bernard of Clairvaux. The interpretation I am proposing here puts Suger's views much closer to the aesthetics of the twelfth century as formulated not only by the school of St. Victor, but also by Bernard himself, whose ideas on art allowed more concessions to and offer more points of contact with Suger than is generally realized.

as a work of edification may find its finest realization in sacred architecture, designed and constructed by the medieval monk, requiring for its material construction physical labor and for its artistic design the vision of divine glory. Dom Leclercq's remarks are valid for the psychology of medieval art in general. The work of art cannot be completed without the assistance of grace which illuminates the artist's entire person, his intellect as well as his moral powers.

The Middle Ages thought of art essentially as the subjective perfection of the artist, as the spiritual power to conceive and to create.[4] According to this view, there were two modes of artistic appreciation: that of the artist, and that of the contemplator. Only that of the artist is pure, since only he beholds the spiritual vision in the material image he creates. The contemplator who sees only this image cannot quite appreciate the work of art unless the artist enables him to participate in the inspiration of the creative process. Hence, the main concern of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is not the unfolding of a great eschatological panorama, but rather the poet's account of his own gradual illumination and his ability to make us relive it as we read his work.

Something quite similar is true for the artistic writings of Suger. It is significant that what he describes in the treatise on the Consecration is not so much the completed sanctuary as the work of bringing it to its completion; or rather, we are to understand the completed work by reliving, step by step, the process that lead to it. To Suger, the essential process is not the manual labor, but the "edification" of the artist, the illumination of his soul by the vision of the divine harmony and the reflection of that harmony in the material work of art.

Regarding the spiritual and mystical significance of his architectural undertaking, Suger was quite explicit. In Chapter V of the same treatise, he recalled the completion of the Gothic choir, "the City of the Great King," as he called it. His words evoke the image of Christ, the Corner stone "which joins one wall to the other; *in whom all the building*—whether spiritual or material—*groweth unto one holy temple in the Lord. In Whom we, too, are* taught *to be builded together for an habitation of God through the* Holy *Spirit* by ourselves in a spiritual way, the more loftily and fitly we strive to build in a material way." The italicized words of this quotation are taken from the Letter to the Ephesians (2:19 ff); the architectural imagery, a mere metaphor for St. Paul, is here directly related to the new build-

[4] See E. de Bruyne, *Etudes d'esthetique medievale* (Bruges, 1946) III, 115.

ing Suger has erected. By his own additions, so adroitly inserted in the biblical text that they go almost unnoticed, the Abbot of St. Denis imparted to the act of building a theological and mystical significance: we shall be builded together for an habitation of God precisely in the measure that we strive to build loftily and aptly in a material way.

Thus is explained not only the beginning of the treatise but also its end. Suger describes there the splendid gathering of nineteen archbishops and bishops who took part in the dedication ceremonies of the new church. To Suger, the symphony of voices chanting the liturgy seemed "an angelic rather than a human melody." And in a skillful variation of the opening theme of his treatise, the Abbot pictured the enactment of the Eucharistic sacrifice upon the altar as "the joining together of the material with the immaterial, the human with the Divine by which God transforms the present kingdom into the celestial one."

The content of Suger's treatise on the consecration may thus be summed up as follows: It opens with the intellectual vision of divine harmony above the discord of things. The construction of the church, which is then recounted, is the gradual realization of this vision both in the work of art and in those who have undertaken it from a desire "to be glorified by participation in the Eternal Reason." This work of "edification" is consummated in the consecration of the sanctuary, that is in the solemn enactment of the sacrament of union between God and man to which the church is dedicated.

The seemingly disconnected parts of the treatise on the Consecration are thus seen to form in fact a consistent whole. But the entire work must, in turn, be related to those chapters in the later Report on the Administration in which Suger speaks of his art. It is here that the Abbot interprets the completed church and its treasures as reflections of ultimate reality. He takes for granted, however, his readers' acquaintance with the earlier treatise in which he had described the gradual realization of this insight in the artist's soul. We, as contemplators of his art, cannot fully understand the message conveyed by the image unless we, too, can somehow partake of the vision beheld by the artist. This means that Suger must enable us to look at the completed building to relive the mystical process of edification.

We can now define more precisely the connection between Suger's theological and artistic views. Scholarship so far has recognized in the Abbot's interpretations of his art no more than *ex post facto* allegories invented in order to justify his passion for artistic display.

In the light of what has been said, this view has become untenable. Suger leaves no doubt that he considered the spiritual experience recorded in the treatise on the Consecration the cause of his artistic activity. As a philosophy of art, Suger's views are unoriginal; they are shared by most of his contemporaries. But to him this philosophy was an artistic experience, the germinal idea in which a new architectural style originated. And by his literary description of this experience—a description which is first a confession and only secondarily a didactic exposition—he has, as it were, rendered transparent the creative process which translated the theology of light into the Gothic style. Hence the unparalleled importance of Suger's writings. They compel us to understand the Gothic cathedral as the image of the spiritual vision which Suger has sought to evoke. But his purpose in doing so becomes clear only if we cast a glance at the historical circumstances that occasioned his work.

We have already noted that Suger's monastery was no ordinary Benedictine house. It occupied a position of unparalleled dignity and power in medieval France. "The foremost of all French, and perhaps of all European abbeys" the older historians have rightly called it. Medieval sources abound in references to its pre-eminence. They designate it as the crown of the realm, the sacred mother of French churches. No other ecclesiastical institution, perhaps no other institution of any type, was more closely identified with the Capetian monarchy than was St. Denis. As one of the "royal abbeys" it was exempt from all feudal and ecclesiastical domination, and subject only to the king. In the first half of the twelfth century, St. Denis became the cornerstone of royal policy. Louis VI began and effected the consolidation of the monarchy with singular success. In his fight against feudal insurrection, the king could generally rely on his ecclesiastical vassals more than on his aristocratic ones. Nevertheless, even within ecclesiastical ranks, he found himself confronted with redoubtable enemies. The movement of religious reform emanating from Cluny aimed at the emancipation of the entire church from political domination. The great reformed monasteries defied the king's attempt to bring them within the orbit of his power. In this struggle, the king's strongest ally was the monastery of St. Denis; and he owed his final success to the man who in turn owed his abbacy of St. Denis to him. This man was Suger.

Suger's career, which led from the humblest origin to the regency of France, cannot be recounted here. But two aspects of his statesmanship are of significance in our present context. The first and

more general one is the blending of political and religious motivations. It would be a mistake to see in Suger what we would call a political priest, a man sacrificing his religious calling to secular schemes. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, so impatient of worldly clerics, noted with admiration that Suger, even during the most trying secular preoccupations, did not neglect his spiritual duties, but succeeded in reconciling the two. Nor can this fact surprise us. Medieval man, in all his pursuits, was harassed by the feeling of his contingency. This feeling found its assurance in religion. Louis VI himself was a man of deep piety, and it is characteristic that while he used the Abbey of St. Denis for his political designs, it was precisely in St. Denis that he sought sanction for them. On the eve of meeting a threatened invasion of the German emperor, the king received, at the altar of St. Denis and from the hands of Abbot Suger, the *oriflamme,* the holy banner of France. But the *oriflamme* was really the standard of St. Denis, more precisely of one of the monastery's fiefs which the kings of France held as vassals of the Abbots of St. Denis. Thus the banner which, as the very symbol of the realm, preceded all other flags in battle proclaimed at the same time the king vassal of St. Denis. Few facts are more characteristic of the mood of the age.

The second element of Suger's statesmanship is closely related to the first. The abiding goal of his administration was peace. As prime minister and as regent in the king's absence, Suger continued the work of political consolidation. But for him the means to this end was not warfare but the reconciliation of hostile factions. It was this aspect of Suger's administration that impressed his contemporaries more than any other. To them, he appeared as the biblical "conciliator even in times of wrath."

What is strangest from our modern point of view is that these political concepts of the Abbot of St. Denis, inseparable from his theological ones, blend into his aesthetic philosophy. This becomes strikingly apparent at the end of the treatise on the consecration of the new church. We know that the rank of the attending prelates often transformed these ceremonies into events of considerable political importance.[5] Suger's own description makes clear what significance he attributed to the unprecedented gathering of secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries headed by the king himself for the consecration of his new sanctuary. But he seeks to convey this significance symbolically: he has already described the completed building as a

[5] See R. Crozet, "Etude sur les Consecrations Pontificales," *Bulletin Monumental,* 104 (1946).

mirror of divine harmony; now the same harmony, audible and visible to the senses, is effected sacramentally through the rite of consecration. For his readers, Suger evokes the ceremony by likening the ecclesiastical hierarchy that participated in it to the celestial one. Indeed, the entire peaceful gathering of the dignitaries of the realm appears to him as an image of a transcendental pattern. After recalling the rite in which all individuals united in giving glory to God, Suger concludes with a prayer envisaging the union of the heavenly and earthly kingdoms "in one republic."

Did he choose the political overtones of his language deliberately? The notion of a universal harmony that pervades all creation and of which the unity of artistic composition, the order of the liturgy, and the "concord" of a peaceful society are reflections was dear to the musical mysticism of the age. But if Suger invokes this vision of ultimate harmony, this has special significance. He does not claim to be an original thinker. The ideas he expresses, the likening of the ecclesiastical to the celestial hierarchy, the interpretation of his art as an image of divine beauty are to refer his contemporaries to the author upon whose spiritual and intellectual legacy his monastery was built and upon whose authority Suger's own success as a statesman and to some extent the unity of the French realm depended. This author is the Pseudo-Areopagite with whose importance for the medieval metaphysics of light we are already familiar. A misunderstanding, unparalleled I think in the history of ideas, moved Suger to derive his aesthetic philosophy from this author and to build the first Gothic sanctuary under the inspiration of his mystical theology.

Who is really concealed behind this curious name, we do not know: almost certainly a Syrian of the late fifth century of our own era. But he claims himself to be the disciple of St. Paul, to have seen the eclipse of the sun which accompanied Christ's death, and to have witnessed the death of the Virgin. All these claims are spurious, but the Middle Ages gave them credence. The author was identified with the Denis of the Acts of the Apostles who was a member of the Areopagus of Athens and who became a convert of St. Paul. The result of the medieval error was momentous. It invested the anonymous Syrian with the dignity of the apostolic age. The writings of Denis were studied with a respect usually reserved for the most venerable expositions of Christian doctrine. One degree only separated them from the authority of the canonical Scriptures themselves. However, the ideas which went under the name of Denis the Areopagite did not require such false credentials to command attention.

They represent the greatest synthesis of Neo-Platonism and Christian mysticism and are expounded with the irresistible eloquence of ecstatic vision. Yet, whatever Christian thought of the Middle Ages may have owed to Plato, however great the admiration he enjoyed, his philosophy was not approached without hesitation. The alleged apostolic dignity of the Pseudo-Areopagite—as scholarship has dubbed the impostor—was necessary in order to gain for his ideas admission to the theological and metaphysical speculation of the Middle Ages, to allow them to exercise their full impact upon the history of ideas.

If the great Syrian can be blamed for the first misunderstanding attached to his name, he was innocent of the second. The author of the "dionysian" writings came to be identified not only with a disciple of St. Paul, but with Denis the third century apostle of France. The strange composite figure which emerged from the erroneous identification of three different personalities seemed to embody the venerable age and apostolic dignity of the French Church.

The Saint Denis of this legend was, of course, the title saint of Suger's monastery. To this fact the institution owed its pre-eminence. The saint and martyr whose relics were preserved here was held to be the Apostle of France and the patron of the royal house; he was also thought to be the author of writings judged to be of unique importance. No other theologian has similarly impressed upon the twelfth century the conviction of his divine inspiration. His influence permeated the thought, indeed the entire culture of the Crownland in its greatest age. The fountainhead of this influence was Suger's monastery. Its monks were traditionally entrusted with the official historiography of the kingdom. As a result of their efforts, there emerged not only the "Great Chronicles of Saint Denis," but the conviction that the glory of French culture was due to the revival of Greek thought. Philosophy, it was held, which had once flowered in Athens had been reborn in France; and the genius to whom this work of transmission was attributed was St. Denis.

The prominence given to the saint's intellectual achievements is understandable enough at a time when France witnessed the first flowering of scholasticism. A generation enamored of philosophy but still rooted in faith demanded a patron that was at once a great saint and a great thinker. When the irrepressible Abelard, then a monk at St. Denis, suggested that the Apostle of France was not identical with the disciple of St. Paul, he was expelled from the monastery and narrowly escaped a trial for treason against the state. The history and reality of the French monarchy had become inseparable from the vision expounded by the author of the *Celestial Hierarchy,* whose

name—Montjoie St. Denis—was the official battlecry of the royal house.

In his time, Suger was the foremost champion of Saint Denis. As a statesman he sought to promote peace in the realm by appealing to the general reverence for the patron saint. The Abbot's political ideals reflect dionysian theology; his aesthetic views depend altogether on it. And his art was conceived as its visual exposition.

Suger's philosophy of art is essentially that of the twelfth century, but the common element in the Platonizing aesthetics of his time is due to the fact that its main exponents, at least those of the Ile de France, all rely on the Pseudo-Areopagite. They take for granted acquaintance with him among their readers, and quote his authority as the irrefutable vindication of their own convictions.[6]

As a thinker Suger was not the equal of the great interpreters of Denis. The Abbot's writings are at best sketchy annotations to his master's theology. But they are not meant to be more than clues to the work in which he had actually undertaken to paraphrase the vision of Denis. This "paraphrase" was indeed a work of surprising and singular originality, the most magnificent illustration ever bestowed upon a system of thought: the architecture of St. Denis.

Viewed as a translation of theological speculation into the pattern of architecture, the first Gothic sanctuary elucidates indeed the structure and spirit of medieval universalism. The *genius loci* has contributed its share. Nowhere but in St. Denis was such an apotheosis of the apostle and theologian of France so feasible and so fitting. Only a man who considered himself the "child of Saint Denis," who had steeped himself from his early youth in the dionysian writings could have attempted this "translation." But what rendered such an undertaking historically possible was the fact that during Suger's abbacy the thought attributed to the patron of the monarchy, trans-

[6] Panofsky's brilliant remarks concerning Suger's dependence upon the Pseudo-Areopagite and the latter's translator and commentator, John Scot Erigena, convey a somewhat misleading impression. Suger was, in his time, not the only important writer on aesthetics to be influenced by Denis; nor is it necessary to assume that Erigena was the only interpreter of the Syrian mystic on whom Suger depended. The passages quoted by Panofsky to demonstrate Erigena's influence upon Suger also occur in the commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* by Hugh of St. Victor. Hugh, to be sure, had also used Erigena's commentary. But he developed the dionysian theology into a systematic philosophy of beauty that had no rival during the twelfth century. Hugh's commentary was dedicated to Louis VII in 1137; it almost certainly passed through Suger's hands. It is more than likely that, in his own writings on art, the Abbot of St. Denis is indebted to Hugh. The point is not without significance for my present thesis. If, as I believe, the theology of Denis was a source of Gothic architecture, it is important to realize how deep and widespread was his influence on the thought of twelfth century France.

cending the esoteric realm of theological speculation, assumed the character of a political challenge: to Suger, the dionysian view of ultimate harmony is the prototype of political peace as well as of artistic perfection. It was this conviction that enabled him to convey his political ideal in the language of stone.

None of these considerations can explain Suger's artistic achievement. His church is the fruit of an unusual blend of unusual faculties. Among these, the most noteworthy is the instinctive and naive power of condensing abstract theological concepts into the images and patterns of art. Nowhere, perhaps, is this power demonstrated as impressively as in Suger's use of stained glass windows. He was not their inventor; but he was the first to use them as integral parts of architecture, as transparent walls and as artistic media which would render the symbolic significance of what we have come to call Gothic strikingly apparent.

According to Neo-Platonic and dionysian metaphysics, things, as we have seen, exist only in so much as they partake of the transcendental light of God. All created existence, according to this view, is a kind of transparency, in the terms of Hugh of St. Victor, a "sacred veil through which the ray of Divine Light shines without blinding us." Hugh and others have actually used the stained glass window for the symbol of this idea. They describe it as the image either of our senses illuminated by grace for the perception of Divine Truth, or of the prophets and apostles illuminated by revelation and illuminating its meaning for us. We are reminded of the transparency of the heavenly hosts in Dante's *Paradiso* (31:18) and of the figures of saints in the windows of French cathedrals. Suger may be called the father of this symbolism. The windows he commissioned had a profound influence upon the art of the stained glass window during its greatest age. In the couplets by which he explains the meaning of the biblical scenes he had selected for representation, he reminds the onlooker that as images of ultimate reality these are inadequate, deliberately stressing, as Professor Panofsky observes, the "veiling" and "unveiling" function of all images of Divine Reality. It is again the theology of the Pseudo-Areopagite masterfully applied to the symbolic language of art.

The preceding pages suggest two general questions. It will be asked first of all whether the connection between Neo-Platonic thought and Gothic architecture which exists in Suger's abbey prevailed elsewhere. Can we maintain, in other words, that the great cathedrals of the Ile de France were generally designed as symbols of dionysian

light metaphysics? Formulated in this way, the question can hardly be answered in the affirmative. Since Suger's church was the prototype of Gothic cathedrals, it stands for this very reason between its stylistic descendants and the theological vision that inspired it. The copy of a great work of art is not the recreation of the peculiar experience of reality that inspired it originally. Just because the influence of the Abbey of St. Denis upon subsequent architecture was so deep, it may be doubted whether the architects who used it as a model may have recalled too vividly the idea Suger had sought to convey.

It remains noteworthy, however, that Gothic architecture in its first and decisive phase is to an altogether remarkable degree the architecture of the French monarchy. The reason for this has been called a political one. But it has been assigned merely to the impulse which royal power gave to the great artistic undertakings of the time. This is not yet an explanation of the Gothic style. We may ask if the royal patronage bestowed upon the building of Gothic cathedrals was not connected with the fact that these were understood as artistic symbols of the mystical theology of the alleged patron of France. In this more specific sense, the Gothic cathedral is indeed related to the French monarchy, especially if we recall that the first flowering of the new style coincides with the revival of dionysian thought in the schools of St. Victor and Chartres. In these scholastic institutions of the French Crownland, theological speculation and liturgical devotion were intimately connected; the special veneration paid to Saint Denis as patron of the French church also helped to shape the pattern of early scholastic thought. And the philosophy of beauty emanating from Chartres and St. Victor bears the imprint of dionysian theology as does the art of the same time and region. In this sense it may be said that the art of the Ile de France, not unlike that of Florence two centuries later, owes its ultimate inspiration to the genius of Plato.[7]

This leads to our final consideration. I have tried to interpret the Gothic cathedral as an expression of medieval universalism. What is the meaning of this universalism for us? In his Gifford lectures, Etienne Gilson has called attention to two seemingly conflicting

[7] I have been unable to deal in this essay with another important, if generally neglected aspect of Gothic aesthetics: the notion that harmony of artistic composition is based on arithmetic proportions which are essentially the same in a pleasing work of art as in a pleasing work of music. In Suger's first treatise, this view is reflected in the striking use of musical terms. It has profoundly influenced Gothic architecture: and, like the aesthetics of light, the aesthetics of musical proportion draws its original inspiration from Plato.

interpretations of medieval civilization that have succeeded each other: the romantic one, with its emphasis upon the symbolic and poetic spirit of the Middle Ages, and, as a reaction to this one-sided view, the more recent attitude which sees in the great rational systems of scholastic philosophy the epitome of that age. As Gilson shows, these two interpretations ought to complement each other; it was, indeed, an essentially poetical world view which the philosophy of the High Middle Ages removed from the "plane of imagery and feeling" and integrated in a comprehensive system of "precise laws and definite metaphysical conceptions."

Gilson's analysis of medieval thought stresses an interpenetration of imaginative and logical elements quite similar to that which determines the character of the greatest medieval poem, *The Divine Comedy,* and the greatest medieval work of art, the Gothic cathedral. In each case it is the synthesis that moves us, even where its constituent parts may have lost their relevance. It is this contradictory aspect of medieval universalism which is remarkable. The physics, metaphysics, and theology of light which concerned the medieval Platonists, the notion of peace in which human society mirrors and blends into the harmony of celestial beings, may mean little to us. The evocation of these ideas in the Gothic cathedral is overwhelming. And it is noteworthy that this experience is so powerful that it leaves us unaware of a distinction between the moving "rhetoric" of artistic language and the relevance or irrelevance, from our viewpoint, of the ideas which it conveys. The entire world view acquires a plausibility which no modern philosophy and no modern work of art—just because their realms remain distinct—can match. In the Gothic cathedral, light is not the common phenomenon of daily use and empirical knowledge. It appears as that power to which our entire existence is mysteriously ordered. And to this vision we give assent, whether or not it coincides with the definitions of modern science or even with those of our own religious beliefs.

MAN BETWEEN INFINITES

Karl Löwith

THE GREAT astronomic discoveries of the sixteenth century initiated a turning point in the intellectual history of the West. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the concept of man's existence within an orderly universe appears to have been losing ground. Writers and preachers were indulging in what may be called a cosmology of corruption.[1] The universe seemed to have lost all harmony and stability. Mutability extended from the earth to the heavens and man was lost in an incoherent world. Donne expressed this mood strikingly in his "Anatomy of the World":

> And new philosophy calls all in doubt,
> The Element of fire is quite put out;
> The Sun is lost, and th'earth, and no man's wit
> Can well direct him where to looke for it.
> And freely man confesse that this world's spent,
> When in the Planets, and the Firmament
> They seeke so many new; then see that this
> Is crumbled out againe to his Atomies.
> 'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone;
> All just supply, and all Relation:
> Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot,
> For every man alone thinkes he hath got
> To be a Phoenix, and that then can bee
> None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee.
> This is the world's condition now.

What men need is a "new compass for their way."

It was Pascal who drew the philosophical consequences from the impact of the "new philosophy" of Nature upon the condition of man. He reset, as it were, the compass of Christian faith in accordance with a changed universe. His existential pathos and his insight into the human condition can, therefore, neither be reduced to the non-

[1] See V. Harris, *All Coherence Gone* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949).

Christian perspective of contemporary Existentialism, nor can they be separated from the conception of the universe. To understand Existentialism historically as well as systematically, we have to refer to the new concept of an infinite universe which seems at first to be the farthest removed from any immediate existential concern of a self with itself. It is my thesis here that we "exist" (in the sense of Existentialism) because we are lost in the universe of modern natural science. This was clearly realized by Pascal, but not by Kierkegaard and his followers.

For Kierkegaard, existence is the only "interest" of relevant thinking; it is the *inter-esse* between theoretical thought and reality, that on which theoretical metaphysics necessarily is stranded. Existence as such is, to use Schelling's term, "unforethinkable," and yet the only serious interest of an existing thinker. Irritated by this inexplicable fact of the contingency of our existence, Kierkegaard advances the questions: "Who am I? How came I here? What is this thing called the world? . . . Why was I not consulted? . . . How did I obtain an interest in this big enterprise they call reality? . . . And if I am compelled to take part in it, where is the director? I should like to make a remark to him."

Almost the same question was raised two centuries earlier by Pascal.

> When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I fill . . . cast into the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant, and which know me not, I am frightened, and shocked at being here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who has put me here? By whose order and direction have this place and time been allotted to me?

In spite of the resemblance of Pascal's last sentence to Kierkegaard's sarcastic exclamations, there is a distinct difference of tone and intention. With Pascal the frightful contingency of man's existence is apprehended within a definite frame of reference: the spatial and temporal infinites of the physical universe. For Pascal the world is not a "big enterprise," but the majestic and overwhelming reality of the physical universe. With Kierkegaard and the Existentialists this physical universe, as conceived by modern natural science, is absent, or more precisely it is present only as the insignificant background of man's forlorn existence. Insignificant as this background seems to be existentially, it is the reverse of existence as understood by Existentialism.

The "world" which Sartre, Heidegger, and Kierkegaard describe and analyze concretely is neither a living cosmos nor a creation, nor is

it the universe of mathematical physics. It is *our* world of selfhood and interhuman relations within an anonymous mass-society. It is a world without nature. With Sartre nature is an opaque *en-soi*, over against the *pour-soi* of human existence, and accessible only in the natural appetites of the human body. In Heidegger, nature is subsumed under the lowest category of the merely "extant" *(Vorhandensein)*, in distinction to the human *Da-sein* which alone can exist and have a world. Neither the social world nor the natural world can relieve us of the necessity of taking over the sheer "factuality" of our contingent existence, of "being cast" into the world.

Kierkegaard is exclusively concerned with man's inner life. He resumes Augustine's quest for the soul and its relation to God as the only two things worth knowing. He thereby implicitly dismisses the classical concern with the logos of the cosmos as a pagan curiosity. A sentence like that of Anaxagoras, that the end for which man is born is the contemplation of the sun, the moon, and the sky, is utterly strange to Kierkegaard and his followers. It is equally strange to those of us who, unencumbered by a god or a soul, but clothed in psychology and psychoanalysis, are living on the capital of the Christian concern for man's soul. Confronted with the task of recapturing a Christian existence according to the law of the Gospel, Kierkegaard felt that he had to ignore the laws of the cosmos and the modern discoveries of the telescope. If Christ appeared today, he said, the Christian task of appropriating His message would still be the same as it was for the first generation of Christians. But the natural scientist, and all those who believe in the truth of science rather than of the Gospel, would demand an examination of Christ's brain under a microscope to determine whether He is the Son of God or a schizophrenic. Unfortunately for the sciences, all the modern discoveries by telescope and microscope are irrelevant for an understanding of the human condition in its inwardness. A thoughtful person, according to Kierkegaard, who wants to understand what it means to exist as a self before God cannot be interested in natural science; for it does not make any different for man's moral choices and religious decisions whether the moon is made of blue cheese or something else. What's the use of explaining the whole physical universe or world history if one does not understand oneself, one's own single self? As an existing self, man is singled out from the physical cosmos and world history and their deceptive greatness. To Kierkegaard the concern with six thousand years of world history, or with some billion years of cosmic history, is an escape from one's self into an illusory importance.

Thus, if anything unites these philosophies of existence by a common pattern it is the negative experience that man has no definite place and nature within the natural universe. This metaphysical displacement is, however, not a novelty of the twentieth century, but rather *the* modern destiny. "Since Copernicus," Nietzsche said, "man is falling from a center toward an *x*." This universal destiny is aggravated by man's social solitariness amid a modern mass-society.

Neither classical philosophy nor Christian theology saw man's position in the universe in this way. For Aristotle, existence as such was an unquestioned element within the essential structure, order, and beauty of an imperishable and clearly delimited cosmos, a cosmos which included the existence of rational animals called men. As an animal man shared in the properties of living things, as a rational animal he had the privilege of contemplating this perfect hierarchy of beings. For Thomas, man and the universe were contingent existences, but contingent to God and bound together by the act of creation. Though man alone was created in the likeness of God, and thus set apart from and above the animal world, the unified Christian concept worked for man and world alike. Only with the dissolution of these ancient convictions, classic and Christian, did Existentialism come into its own. For if the universe is neither eternal and divine (as it was for Aristotle), nor contingent but created (as it was for Thomas); and if man has no definite place and status in the hierarchy of an eternal or created cosmos, then he begins to "exist" in it like an outcast in an "ecstatic" condition. And since none of us is exempt from the impact of the dissolution of these ancient beliefs and certainties, since we cannot restore the universe of Aristotle or Thomas, even less the post-Cartesian synthesis of Hegel, we are all "existentialists" whether we like it or not. It is not a "failure of nerve" (as has been suggested) which brought Existentialism into existence. What failed us was not our nerve, but rather our belief in a divinely ordered universe in which man could feel himself at home, or *chez soi*, as it were. No social order of whatever kind, not even order plus freedom, can possibly make up for that lack of fundamental order in the universe. Hence, we have indeed "to be," or exist, in all those descriptive terms of sheer factuality, contingency, and absurdity which Extentialism has brought to light. For how can one feel at home in an "exploding" universe, the chance result of statistical probabilities? Such a universe cannot inspire confidence and sympathy, nor can it give orientation and meaning to man's existence in it. We are indeed cast into this world and therefore must postulate ourselves, having postulated such a universe with such unex-

pected success. It is the character of our world and world concept which makes us exist existentially.

What makes us uncomfortable and throws us back upon ourselves is that our modern universe has no center and no limits. As an infinite universe of indefinite limits, it has no definite place for a finite man. If infinity has to be included in the image of the world, the point is reached where every image ends—the point of the nebulae of astrophysics, those scattered fragments of an initial explosion a hundred million light-years distant from us. We can disregard the important changes which, since Newton, have occurred in mathematical physics, for the world has not become again an encompassable world-order. Einstein's conception of "finite" space, and the assumption that beyond certain limits the concepts of space and time cease to be applicable, by no means restore the universe as an imaginable home for man. Such a universe can perhaps still be described, or rather calculated, but it can no longer be imagined; and the scientist who calculates it does not live in it as a human person.[2]

"Infinity" is a term which was at first applied not to the physical universe but was reserved for its creator.[3] The natural scientist of early modern times considered infinity to be an attribute of God. Thus, when Copernicus and Kepler studied the structure of the planetary system, they believed that they were finding the spirit of God in the mathematical laws of nature. When Newton explained Kepler's laws in terms of mechanics, it was held that the world could be explained in purely physical terms. What still defied mechanical explanation was the origin of the planetary system. But when Laplace rendered its mechanical origin probable, thus confirming the cosmological theory of Kant, he declined to speak of God and to involve Him with the universe. With Kant, God became a postulate of our practical, moral reason, while theoretical reason, the understanding of nature, needed, as he said, only some matter to construct the physical world on a few principles invested in man's reason.

But Kant's "Copernican revolution" was already initiated by Descartes's distinction of man and world as *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Consequently the modern consciousness is a profoundly divided one. It lives in two different worlds of extreme subjectivity and objectivity, worlds which are as opposed to each other as they are interdependent. In a famous passage at the end of his *Critique of Practical Reason,* Kant formulates it this way:

[2] G. M. Buber, *Between Man and Man* (London, Kegan Paul, 1947), Ch. V.

[3] See C. F. von Weizsäcker, *The History of Nature* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 60 ff.

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above us and the moral law within us. . . . I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The former begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into limitless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuance. The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity but which is traceable only by the inner understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent . . . connection.

Objectively, the two worlds are strictly separate: in the face of the universe natural man is nothing, in relation to his moral consciousness, as a person, he is all-important. In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant goes even further. He realizes, like a radical existentialist, the impossibility of establishing the inner necessity of the whole creation. For to establish it, we would have to know that there is an ultimate principle of existence which exists necessarily or essentially. But we cannot conceive of *any* existence, not even of God, as necessarily existing, as the ultimate cause of contingent existences.

That unconditioned necessity, which we require as the last support of all things, is the true abyss of human reason. . . . We cannot put off the thought, nor can we support it, that a Being, which we represent to ourselves as the highest among all possible beings, should say to himself: I am from eternity to eternity, there is nothing beside me, except that which is something through my will—*but whence am I?* Here all sinks away from under us, and the highest perfection, like the smallest, passes without support before the eyes of speculative reason, which finds no difficulty in making the one as well as the other to disappear without the slightest impediment.

What remains is radical, universal contingency of existence, or existence "without support." Such thought is, however, "intolerable" for human reason; while its opposite, inner necessity, is "undemonstrable" for it. The difference between Kant and contemporary Existentialists is that the latter apparently have managed to find radical contingency tolerable and even liberating, and the demonstrability of an inherent necessity of existence to be unnecessary.

It is not difficult to imagine where Kant's admiration of the starry heavens above us and the moral law within us might lead. It needs only a slight shift in the temper, from awe and admiration to a neutral recognition and from there to a positivistic acceptance of the "findings" of the telescope on the one hand and of the Freudian "superego" on the other, to circumscribe what is now commonly held to be man's position in the universe. For some people, the only link which

still connects the firmament with humanity is the horoscope. If this disproportion between man and the universe is not always clearly felt, it is due to our obsession with the immediate problems of our social world and to the confusion of the natural universe with our scientific construction of it, which is indeed ours and not contrived by the universe itself.

To understand this disproportion correctly—that is, as an essential disorder—I refer now to Pascal as the first Existentialist of the modern age.

Pascal and his older contemporary, Descartes, both realized that the order of the scholastic system had become untenable. Their common starting point was a radical doubt with respect to traditional certainties, in order to reach a new kind of assurance. Descartes believed himself to have attained the new certainty, beyond any doubt, by radical reasoning. Pascal felt, as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche felt after him, that Descartes's doubt was still superficial and also, consequently, the certainty which he had extracted from it. According to Pascal, only the certainty of faith can counterbalance the fundamental doubtfulness of our human being and knowing, including the knowledge of the abstract sciences. For the ultimate axioms of mathematics are as evident as they are undemonstrable. "It may be that there are true demonstrations; but this is not certain. Thus, this proves only that it is not certain that all is uncertain"—which testifies once more to the "glory of scepticism." The master of both Descartes and Pascal, who stimulated in them the sense of scepticism, was Montaigne; but he was satisfied with undermining all kinds of dogmatic certainties, while enjoying the superior refinement of sceptical suspense.

In our doctrinaire age, where people long for guidance, security, and constructive results, scepticism has fallen into disrepute. The deprecator of scepticism forgets, however, that genuine scepticism (which means, literally, keen observation and investigation) is the result of a radical search for truth. Only by the highest standard of truth, whether attainable or not, can one realize the doubtfulness and the illusions of our human judgments. The degree to which Descartes's and Pascal's doubt is radical, therefore, is in direct proportion to the rigor of their quest for certain truth. Descartes is striving for absolute certainty by means of his doubt; Pascal erects religious faith on the "truth of scepticism."

The never failing spring from which Pascal drew his scepticism was the study of man on the pattern of Montaigne; but he probed much deeper than his master into the ultimate ground of man's uncertainties, illusions, and contradictions. The two opposite and ex-

treme standards by which his scepticism has to be judged are the lasting certainty of mathematical demonstration on the one hand, and the fleeting certainty of faith on the other. Thus the wealth and acuteness of Pascal's moralistic observations and reflections, the range of his study of man, have to be interpreted within the context of Pascal, the scientist and the believer.

Pascal combined in his person the genius of a creative mathematician with the insight of a profound moralist and Christian believer, or to use his own terms, the "spirit of geometry" with the "spirit of subtle intuition *(esprit de finesse)*, and both with the "reason of the heart." As a natural scientist he had the intellectual superiority of knowing that kind of world into which we are cast. As a keen moralist, familiar with the habits and passions of the men of the world in the grand style, he had the social superiority of the *honnête homme*. As a Christian believer who had suffered the joy of a mystical experience, he had the spiritual superiority of radical submission and renunciation over all those whose experience is confined to that of a mastering scientist and a sceptical moralist. But even as a moralist and believer, Pascal was informed by the sobering "spirit of geometry." The piece of paper on which he had jotted down his mystical experience relates it with the precision of a scientific observer; and in the *Pensées*, the rationality of faith is demonstrated in the famous fragment on the theory of probabilities.

Pascal defines man by outlining his definite limits. Since man is not merely a corporeal being with definite and definable properties, but exists consciously and thus surpasses himself, human nature has to be defined in terms of the "human condition." Pascal's basic definition of it seems at first purely formal and external. He defines it in terms of mathematical limits. Man is a "seeming mean" between the two mathematical infinities, the infinitely great and the infinitely small, the Infinite and the Nothing of spatial and temporal extension. Or, to use an arithmetical analogy, man exists like a zero between an ever increasing and an ever decreasing series of numbers. The zero itself is not a number like other numbers, but qualitatively different. The infinitely great and the infinitely small (in number, space, and time) are similar to each other, but are dissimilar to the finite standpoint from which they are judged as infinite. This position between two horizons of infinity is to Pascal analogous to the condition of man within the universe. Man exists between two fathomless infinities or "abysses." Between two such precipices, however, man has no definable standpoint but rather his position is "floating." His position is the condition of a "seeming mean" between the All and the Noth

ing. It is man's condition to be "Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing."

The word "condition," therefore, does not have the same meaning as in the popular phrase of "being conditioned," scientifically, socially, psychologically, and so forth. What Pascal has in mind is not particular conditions which determine man's range of freedom, but the total and unique situation of man within the whole of being, quite independent of the question of determinism and free will. Pascal's definition is an attempt to locate man, to assign him his correct place within the universe. But this place turns out to be nowhere and everywhere. This condition in the universe outside us is at the same time analogous to man's inner condition. Man is suspended, not only between the two mathematical infinities of the infinitely great and the infinitely small, but he is likewise extended and suspended between human greatness and misery.

In bare outline this is the human condition sketched in fragment No. 72 of the *Pensées,* which opens a section on "Man." Though editors have improved the context of Pascal's thought by rearranging the 924 fragments of the *Pensées,* this work remains, like Nietzsche's last work, a disorderly mass of notes which Pascal had jotted down during the last years of his short life with the intention of defending the Christian faith against the sophisticated gentlemen of his time. It is a modern apology because it applies the infinite horizon of modern science to the elucidation of the condition of man. The arguments lead up to the crucial point where man has to find for himself the answer to those questions which are involved in his essential displacement, his being *égaré,* bewildered, and gone astray.

In a note which can be considered as a preface to the section on "Man," Pascal states that he had spent much time in the study of the abstract sciences but had been disheartened by the small number of fellow students with whom he could converse about these difficult matters. Thus he turned, like Descartes, to the study of man. But he found that still fewer studied man than study geometry, for a serious study of man is even more exacting and solitary than that of the abstract sciences. To study the human condition correctly, one has to relate it to the condition of the universe because it is the very disproportion between man and universe which reveals the true condition of man. Under the title "Disproportion" Pascal elaborates on the human condition thus:

> Let man then contemplate the whole of nature in her full and grand majesty, and turn his vision from the low objects which surround him. Let him gaze on that brilliant light, set like an eternal lamp to illumine the universe; let the earth

appear to him a point in comparison with the vast circle described by the sun; and let him wonder at the fact that this vast circle is itself but a very fine point in comparison with that described by the stars in their revolution round the firmament. But if our view be arrested there, let our imagination pass beyond; it will sooner exhaust the power of conception than nature that of supplying material for conception. The whole visible world is only an imperceptible atom in the ample bosom of nature. No idea approaches it. We may enlarge our conceptions beyond all imaginable space; we only produce atoms in comparison with the reality of things. It is an infinite sphere, the center of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere. . . .

Returning to himself, let man consider what he is in comparison with all existence; let him regard himself as lost in this remote corner of nature; and from the little cell in which he finds himself lodged, I mean the universe, let him estimate at their true value the earth, kingdoms, cities, and himself. What is a man in the Infinite?

But to show him another prodigy equally astonishing, let him examine the most delicate things he knows. Let a mite be given him, with its minute body and parts incomparably more minute, limbs with their joints, veins in the limbs, blood in the veins, humours in the blood, drops in the humours, vapours in the drops. Dividing these last things again, let him exhaust his powers of conception, and let the last object at which he can arrive be now that of our discourse. Perhaps he will think that here is the smallest point in nature. I will let him see therein a new abyss. I will paint for him not only the visible universe, but all that he can conceive of nature's immensity in the womb of this abridged atom. Let him see therein an infinity of universes, each of which has its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as in the visible world; . . . Let him lose himself in wonders as amazing in their littleness as the others in their vastness. For who will not be astounded at the fact that our body, which a little while ago was imperceptible in the universe, itself imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, is now a colossus, a world, or rather a whole, in respect of the nothingness which we cannot reach? He who regards himself in this light will be afraid of himself, and observing himself sustained . . . will tremble at the sight of these marvels. . . .

For in fact what is man in nature? A Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything. Since he is infinitely removed from comprehending the extremes, the end of things and their beginning are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret.

. . . Through failure to contemplate these Infinites, men have rashly rushed into the examination of nature, as though they bore some proportion to her. It is strange that they have wished to understand the beginnings [principles] of things, and thence to arrive at the knowledge of the whole, with a presumption as infinite as their object. For surely this design cannot be formed without presumption or without a capacity infinite like nature. . . .

Our intellect holds the same position in the world of thought as our body occupies in the expanse of nature.

Limited as we are in every way, this state which holds the mean between two extremes is present in all our impotence. Our senses perceive no extreme. Too much sound deafens us; too much light dazzles us; too great distance or proximity hinders our view. Too great length and too great brevity of discourse tend to obscurity; too much truth is paralyzing. . . . First principles are too self-evident

for us; too much pleasure disagrees with us. Too many concords are annoying in music; too many benefits irritate us. . . . Extreme qualities are prejudicial to us and not perceptible by the senses. . . . Extreme youth and extreme age hinder the mind, as also too much and too little education. In short, extremes are for us as though they were not, and we are not within their notice. They escape us, or we them.

Pascal concludes that if this constitutional incapacity of man to comprehend the infinites and to reach an ultimate ground and end is well understood, "we shall remain at rest, each in the state wherein nature has placed him." For in comparison with these unattainable infinities all finites are equal, i.e., equally far removed from the first and the last things of philosophical and theological presumptions. The final result of Pascal's considerations seems thus to lead us back to the sceptical wisdom of Montaigne, who concludes his "Defense of Raymond Sebonde" with an explicit rejection of the idea that man should surpass the natural limits of his nature. It seems to be in the spirit of Montaigne when Pascal says that since we cannot grasp the extremes, and thereby the whole, "nothing is good but mediocrity. The majority has settled that and finds (sc. rightly) fault with him who escapes it at whichever end. . . . To leave the mean is to abandon humanity."

Yet, Pascal is far from identifying himself with the settled scepticism of Montaigne. He acknowledges the human condition of mediocrity—this analogy of the "seeming mean" between the two infinites—only with the qualification that it is most contrary to our deepest aspiration: to surpass mere humanity by the search for an ultimate foundation from whence to reach the Absolute.

What completes our incapacity to know something perfectly, in the whole and to the end, is that we are composed of mind and body. If we were simply matter we would not know anything. Being body and mind, we know that we are mind and body and that each reacts upon the other; but we do not understand how a mind can be at all united to a body, since mind and body are not different modes of a single substance, but separated in principle by an infinite distance. The infinite distance between mind and body is, however, not the last riddle. It is only a weak analogy to an "infinitely more infinite distance," namely that between mind and charity, in the Christian sense. "From all bodies together we cannot draw forth one little thought; this is impossible and of another order. From all bodies and minds, we cannot produce a feeling of true charity; this is impossible and of another, supernatural order."

The distinctions between matter, that which does not know itself,

body and mind, that which knows itself and something else, and charity, that which lives by the knowledge of faith, have their analogy in three different orders of the human condition: the men of material or wordly power, the men of spirit, and the men of holiness. In all three kinds of order, greatness and power are possible and deserve respect and admiration. The saints have their power, glory, and victory; but they have no need of the worldly greatness of kings and the rich, nor of the intellectual excellence of men of genius. The power of kings over subjects and the power of great minds over inferior ones neither add to nor take from the superior rank of saintliness, of which the other kinds of greatness are but an analogy. Jesus Christ, the perfect model of holiness, was without any worldly power and riches and without any exhibition of knowledge. "He did not invent, he did not reign." He was humble, patient and holy to God, without sin, and his greatness was manifested in lowliness. "But there are some who can only admire worldly greatness, as though there were no intellectual greatness, and others who only admire intellectual greatness, as though there were not infinitely higher things in wisdom." These three orders of greatness constitute a discontinuous hierarchy, as discontinuous as the geometrical hierarchy between a point and a line, a line and a plane, a plane and a body. For a point cannot be extended into a line, nor can a line be divided down to a point. To sum up with Pascal's words:

> All bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth, and its kingdoms, are not equal to the lowest mind, for mind knows all these and itself, and those bodies nothing. All bodies together, and all minds together, and all their products, are not equal to the least feeling of charity. This is of an order infinitely more exalted.

Thus man's "disproportion" in the universe does not imply the absence of any order, but indicates rather a kind of discontinuous order evidenced by the three different and yet analogical kinds of greatness.

Man's aspiration toward greatness is, however, inseparable from man's essential misery, deficiency, and want. It is the mark of man's excellence that whatever possessions and gifts he may have, he is never satisfied with his condition. The greatness of man is proved by his wretchedness. That we *know* our misery is, however, essential for misery itself. If we did not know how to be miserable, we would not be so. A crippled tree or a ruined house is not miserable because it is not aware of its state. Thus the greatness of man lies in the fact that he knows himself to be miserable. On the other hand, one cannot feel miserable without some knowledge of a better state. Nobody is unhappy because he does not have three eyes or two mouths, but

anyone is miserable if he is deprived of what he once had. Thus the present misery of man proves his greatness—it is the misery of a "deposed king." But how to explain this fallen state of man if not by the doctrine of original sin—though the latter itself may be inexplicable? The arguments in Pascal's search for an answer to the problem of Man thus lead up to the mystery of man's original sin and the corresponding mystery of God's revelation in redeeming man. Both mysteries ultimately explain for Pascal man as the "seeming mean" between the All and the Nothing, between greatness and misery, power and impotence. It is the Christian faith alone which can elucidate the combination of greatness and misery in the human condition; for the philosophical schools which stress either man's misery or his greatness are each unable to comprehend the contradicting truth of both states. Nor can the half truths of both schools be combined to make a whole truth. On their own level they rather annihilate each other, to make way for the truth of the Gospel. The Christian faith teaches us to attribute man's misery to his fallen nature and his greatness to grace. This union of nature and grace, of misery and greatness, is but an image of the two natures in the single person of Jesus Christ, the man-God. The crucified Christ unites perfectly both infinite greatness and infinite misery. On the human level alone the contradiction remains unresolved; man as such is a monstrous confusion. "We have an idea of happiness, and cannot reach it. We perceive an image of truth, and possess only a lie. Incapable of absolute ignorance and of certain knowledge, we have thus been manifestly in a degree of perfection from which we have unhappily fallen." Seen in the light of the Christian revelation, nature is such that she testifies everywhere, within man and without, to a lost God and a corrupt, unredeemed nature. Now the two mathematical Infinites, the All and the Nothing, can be understood in their true significance: the infinity of space and time is the greatest mark of the almighty power of God, who created the All out of Nothing. The extremes between which man is placed "meet and reunite by force of distance, and find each other in God, and in God alone."

If we depart from the Christian co-ordinates, the greatness and misery of man are liable to be levelled down to the trivial experience that all things human are ambiguous, and that everybody enjoys and suffers equally his ups and downs. Pascal knew, of course, the average condition of man, between *ennui* and *divertissement*, between idleness and business, pride and despondency; but he saw it from a vantage point which surpasses it. He became more and more firmly

convinced that only the Christian doctrine and the Gospel can answer the quest which is Man. Accordingly, Pascal retired in his last years to a monastery where he wrote the *Pensées* during the intervals of his meditations, after having given away his worldly possessions and renounced his pride in the pursuit of science, particularly geometry, "the most beautiful trade in all the world," but after all only a trade, like that of any skillful artisan. "Philosophers," he once remarked, "they astonish ordinary men who are less educated; Christians, they astonish philosophers." Pascal was both, a philosopher trained in mathematics and physics and also a modern apologist in the succession of Augustine. As a Christian thinker he wrote against Descartes, blaming him for having extended the certainty of reason too far. As a modern Christian thinker, he realized the condition of modern man as no one else before or since.

ON MEANING IN MUSIC

Ernst Krenek

Bookshelves everywhere abound with literature exploring the "meaning" of music. In scope and ambition it reaches from those disarmingly straightforward manuals with titles like *How to Listen to Music* or *What to Listen For in Music,* mainly designed to transform innocent bystanders into reliable buyers of records, all the way to ponderous philosophical treatises dealing with everything between acoustics and psychoanalysis.

Earlier ages, up to the eighteenth century, seem to have been much less preoccupied with the meaning of music, although the creation of music in those periods was no less impressive than it has been since. Apparently the question as to what music signifies arises when and wherever the process of the transmission of music from its maker to the potential recipients hits upon disturbances of some kind. As long as a number of people sufficient to warrant the effort and the expenditure involved in the writing and performing of music derive from the spectacle the expected satisfaction, there is not much reason for inquiring into the nature of that satisfaction. Comment upon the reaction to music on the part of the recipients in those early days is usually limited to the axiomatic statement that listening to music is pleasure, that is, an agreeable experience. It is only in modern times, and increasingly so in our century, that the reaction of the public toward music becomes a puzzling and frequently irritating problem.

During the Middle Ages, the clearest reference to the significance of music was made in the discrimination against certain musical features as being unsuitable for use in religious services. Time and again the Church felt that it had to pronounce against such musical elements as had crept into religious music under the influence of worldly practice. It is easy to see that such injunctions were not so much based on profound theories concerning the absolute meaning of music, but on the observation that such practices on the one hand

deviated from the tradition, since those musical features had not been used in ecclesiastical music before, and on the other hand evoked associations with non-religious situations, since they were commonly used in such. To draw from this the conclusion (as has been done more than once) that some musical elements are religious *per se*, and others are not, is premature. For to a great extent the conviction that a certain type of music is eminently suited for use by the Catholic Church is based on the fact that it had been used in such a manner for a long time, in other words, on tradition. The music which the Navajos believe to be best for their sacred services is undoubtedly religious music of the first order, and yet it would be rejected by the Catholic Church just as emphatically as Strauss waltzes.

It would, then, appear that music is susceptible of still more specific connotation. In fact, this has quite frequently been taken for granted. In critical literature we find any number of references to that nature. Bach's music is supposed to embody the Protestant spirit to perfection, while Bruckner's work is called an unmistakable expression of Catholic mysticism. Beethoven's music seems to represent the spirit of democracy, and Moussorgsky gives voice to the feelings of the suppressed people of Russia. We need go only one step further to arrive at the identification of music with the souls of the various nationalities in whose realms the music originated. This game started early in the nineteenth century, but it was for the Nazis to bring this way of thinking to its absurd climax. According to their doctrine, only full-blooded Germans were really able to appreciate German music, owing to some sort of mystical identity based on vaguely defined biological conditions which the members of the privileged race had in common.

It is not my purpose here to demonstrate the absurdity of such theories, and it should not be necessary. The salient point is that all of these theories, including the less absurd and offensive ones, are founded upon the assumption that music means something with reference to concepts outside of itself. The fact that this assumption has engendered a considerable number of obviously silly notions has led the opponents of such excesses to the view that music does not mean anything at all beyond the facts of the musical process itself. This theory was highly unpopular during the romantic period, when symbolic significance was sought behind every musical detail. At that time, the brilliant Viennese critic and notorious adversary of Richard Wagner, Eduard Hanslick, was a lone exponent of the formalistic approach. In our time the formalistic, or "autonomous" interpretation of musical aesthetics has gained considerable ground.

Among composers Igor Stravinsky is one of its famous representatives.

The autonomous view (according to which music carries its whole meaning within itself, without reference to outside subject matters) will always tempt the professional musician, especially the composer, because it confines any verbalization of musical affairs to the technical aspects which he knows best and which to him seem to be perfectly sufficient to account for the artistic value of the work. He feels that the excellence of a musical composition is due to the perfection with which the operations within the sound material were performed, and that such perfection is measurable according to inherent technical standards. This belief makes him somewhat impatient with "heteronomous" interpretations of music which introduce emotional and intellectual values. He thinks that a piece of music is "good" because the composer arranged his tones in certain artistically excellent ways, and whether the result is said to be melancholy, gay, expressive of love, or of death, or the wrath over the lost penny, does not interest him.

The danger to which the autonomous approach is exposed is a dull and unimaginative academicism. For how can the technical perfection of the compositional procedure be ascertained unless one assumes the existence of objectively demonstrable rules? The fact that the worshippers of middle-of-the-road routine frequently are also vociferous heteronomists rather corroborates than contradicts this observation. To them, Beethoven is a great composer because his music "means" so much, whatever that may be. And in their view, he was able to write music full of significance because he knew the rules better than anybody else.

The autonomous approach will avoid a perhaps unintentional praise of mediocrity, if the excellence of a work is assumed to be based on deviations from the rules rather than on their fulfillment. It is indeed easy to see that the greatness of a composer usually is proportional to his progressiveness, if by this term we mean his will and ability to transcend the stylistic conventions which tradition has imposed on his period as generally accepted procedure. Plausible as this explanation is, it does not take into account two important and obvious phenomena. On the one hand, we are prepared to recognize the greatness of Beethoven's *Eroica* without having to compare it with the lesser efforts of his contemporaries. We do not have to know anything about Kuhlau, Kozeluch, and Gyrowetz in order to be sure that Beethoven was a great composer. Furthermore we are fascinated by his music not because it appears to be full of daring trespasses upon conventional rules. We experience the famous return of the

main theme of the first movement of the *Eroica* as an exciting musical process whether or not we know why it alarmed so many timid theorists. In other words, we feel immediately that this music carries significance without having to be aware of its technical boldness, and this significance is present everywhere in the music, not only in passages of revolutionary character. Such passages are not too frequent in Beethoven anyway, for he was not, after all, a sensation-mongering iconoclast.

It is at this point that the heteronomists seem to gain their foothold. If the significance of music is independent of its technical features, it must be rooted in its ideational aspects. In this view Bach, Beethoven, Schubert were great composers because they were great human beings, animated by thoughts of exceptional dignity and importance and endowed with the special gift of expressing those thoughts through the medium of tones. The *Eroica,* then, is felt to be a great work because Beethoven was inspired to its creation by the concept of heroism, by the ability to identify himself with the soul of a great man, his sufferings, triumphs, and defeats. It is true, however, that nearly all of Beethoven's compositions appear to be significant, even those on which no extra-musical commentaries are passed around. Furthermore, the sensitive listener will be struck by the greatness of the *Eroica* even if he is not informed of its alleged ideational background and the various, mainly apocryphal, anecdotes traditionally attached to that background.

During the nineteenth century, the heteronomist school held such sway that today a great number of people actually maintain that they are unable to enjoy music unless it tells a story. Such people should understand that their real difficulty is not the lack of a story, but rather that they were not told some story and encouraged to believe that the music told the same story, or at least duplicated it in some peculiar manner. Obviously the ideas which are, truly or fictitiously, ascribed to the composer as motives for his creation are not the cause of his music's being felt to be significant. If this were so, the most significant music would be that written by amateurs; for it is the amateur who is most intensely and sincerely preoccupied with grandiose ideas that he plans to express in his works.

What, then, is the connection of music with the world of extra-musical concepts? In an introductory course for laymen I found among the participants a substantial majority searching for the "story behind the music." Since they professed some disappointment at my insistence that a Mozart symphony could and should be enjoyed without the aid of a story, I subjected the group to an experiment

which would clarify their minds on the relationship of music and "story." I explained that I would have them listen to a work by a composer who, in contrast to Mozart, had furnished a very elaborate story to be known not only as the point of departure for his inspiration, but also as a sequence of definite situations which the music would illustrate in its various phases. Since they were so certain—so I said—that music could tell stories, they ought to try to reconstruct the story from the music, or at least indicate what the music was "about." The music was the first movement of Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique,* but it took considerable time to elicit from the group any comment at all. Finally one person came forward with the picture of a fugitive whom his persecutors were pursuing in a movie-like "chase." Someone else spoke of a bird that was hunted down and finally torn to pieces by other birds. Several members agreed with these interpretations. Only after I suggested that music of such magnitude and ambition would hardly be written to illustrate such trivia, somebody ventured the opinion that the piece might be about a man haunted and driven to frenzy by a fearful thought, which came fairly close to Berlioz' program.

It should be mentioned that none of the students indicated that they had heard the piece before, which facilitated the experiment but also threw a strange light on the musical experience of a group whose members had professed specific interest in music. It also seems typical of people who probably are chiefly conditioned by film music that their first associations would be crudely materialistic and limited to the physical world. For the secularization of stylistic resources has reached the point where in any animated cartoon the trumpets of Jericho will be used to illustrate the downfall of an outhouse.

The traits which these reluctantly produced and clumsily formulated interpretations of musical meaning have in common indicate in what direction we may search for the source of that elusive significance. Music does not tell stories, it does not represent circumstances, but it suggests situations to the listener who is inclined to follow such suggestions. If in a piece of music a clarinet is used to imitate the call of a cuckoo, it does not follow that the piece of music tells the story of a cuckoo. But it suggests inevitably a situation in which one may hear a cuckoo, an outdoor scene of some kind. It may then be that other details of the music influence the mind of the listener to elaborate in a more specific direction on the very general notion caused by that first suggestion. The main vehicle by which music produces suggestions above the primitive level of sound imitation is ideas of motion. As music proceeds in time, it consists of a

succession of musical elements underlying the *Ride of the Valkyries* other at considerably different speeds. This condition alone is strongly suggestive of motions of many kinds, and thus also of the objects of which those types of motion may be characteristic, although the objects themselves are in no way depicted by the music. The time succession of sound elements varying in duration and following each is similar to the time succession in which the hoofs of a galloping horse beat the ground. Easily the music suggests the swift motion of a horse or horses. But there is nothing in the music to tell whether it "means" the Valkyries gathering on their rock, or Paul Revere's ride. It is the words that in this case go with the music, which make the situation unambiguous.

Through the variety of pitches music also suggests motion in space. If a melody covers a wide span between its lowest and its highest tones, it easily suggests motion that covers a great deal of ground. If our mind is inclined, or trained, not to dwell on purely materialistic aspects of the physical world, we will transfer the concept of far reaching spatial motion to the realm of psychology and take the musical suggestions of motion in space as symbols of motions of the soul, or emotions. Thus the wide range covered by the melodic lines of the *Ride of the Valkyries* does not only suggest that the horses make prodigious jumps, but invites us to think of the state of mind of those who sit on the horses. There are other features in the music of the Valkyries which through their characteristics of motion (time values and pitches) and their color of sound (distribution of instruments) indicate violence. Since we already think of horses in vehement motion and riders in a state of mental agitation, we are readily influenced to think of night and storm and a generally dramatic, perilous, and sinister situation. Thus we may still have a choice between the Valkyries and Paul Revere, but we shall find it definitely unlikely that the music in question might refer to the training of a pony in a riding academy.

The interpretations that my unsuspecting students gave to Berlioz' piece were obviously based on the following musical situation: alternation of relatively calm passages of uncertain stability in which the music was limited to thin texture, single melodic lines, and isolated sounds, with other passages of rapidly increasing activity, accumulation of sound as if gathering momentum from various directions, quickly growing in loudness, thickness, and speed, rushing swiftly to inconclusive climax points, until after a last, dramatic outburst everything seems to come to a standstill not so much of final peace as of fatigue. The notion that this music depicts the misfortune of a bird

falls short of the real significance of the music as well as of that which Berlioz had intended, not because of a misinterpretation of the musical situation but because of lack of sense for the scope of the musical process. This scope, however, is expressed in those technical aspects which I have discussed earlier in connection with the boldness inherent in all significant music.[1]

The heteronomists are presumably right in saying that a man who does not aim higher with his creative effort than to portray the predicaments of a bird will not write a *Symphonie Fantastique* but probably a short descriptive piece. Yet the autonomists are right in denying that Berlioz' composition *represents* the torments of an artist driven close to insanity by his emotional tragedy. If any connection of the purely musical context of the work—the specific operations performed within the sound material—with extraneous subject matter is desired, a connection with the subject matter suggested by the composer seems to be more plausible than many another association; because the dimensions of the work, the magnitude of the resources set in motion, the unconventional boldness of the compositional procedure point to an unusual situation of a spiritual rather than materialistic nature.

Apart from various types of motion, music contains a great number of other features evocative of general concepts. Some of these are sound qualities which we figuratively call "colors." Each instrument and any combination of instruments have specific coloristic values. Other such characteristics are the result of articulation, the way in which tones are produced and connected with each other (phrasing). A few hints may suffice for illustration: tones may be attacked harshly, with rough accents, or softly, gradually swelling and decreasing in volume. Tones within a phrase may be played shortly and crisply, detached from each other (staccato), or closely tied to each other (legato). The results of these and many other technical processes may be characterized verbally by such adjectives as bright, dark, heavy, light, intense, thin, dainty, ponderous, playful, sinister, cold, warm, soulful, austere, dry, and the like. The important point is that these musical features do not represent any extramusical concepts, but merely suggest them, in so far as the musical elements contain certain characteristics that create sensations which are similar

[1] *On the Elements of Expression in Music* by Donald N. Ferguson (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1930) contains a theory which, to some extent, parallels the analysis set forth here. I think Mr. Ferguson goes too far, however, in trying to derive concrete definitions of extramusical situations and subjects from purely musical characteristics. See particularly p. 52 ff and pp. 57-58.

to those caused by extramusical situations to which those words m
be applied. There is no single musical element which would "sta
for" the concept of heaviness in the same way as the linguistic eleme
"heavy" does.

A particularly enlightening discussion of these conditions may
found in *Philosophy in a New Key,* by Suzanne K. Langer. M
Langer has demonstrated convincingly that music is a discursi
system of symbols very similar to that of language, with the a
important difference that the symbols of music have "connotation
but not "denotation," while those of language have both. Therefo
it is not possible to write a musical dictionary in which every music
element could be assigned one unmistakable meaning. Nor will it
possible to construct a musical grammar and syntax which wou
obey the rules of formal logic as the linguistic grammar and synt
do. If the terms "logic," "grammar," "syntax" and such are appli
to music, they are used figuratively to describe compositional pr
cedures which, through being employed by many composers ov
long periods of time, have become conventionally accepted practic

As far as the problem of significance of music for "our time"
general is concerned, we have to take into account that, through t
commercialization and industrialization of the distribution of mus
in the nineteenth century, an ever increasing number of people a
brought into contact with music. Whether or not this is desirable
hardly in need of discussion, for the mechanics of sociological evol
tion make it inevitable to fall in line with the principles of mass pr
duction even if it were true that only a minority of especially talente
or sensitive, or educated persons is able to appreciate musical valu
to the full. If only an elite is prepared to enjoy a truly symphon
work by Alban Berg, it still takes a symphony orchestra to make t
experience available, and symphony orchestras must perform t
services required by the demands of mass production if they want
stay in existence. Thus the question of what contemporary mus
"means" must be discussed with a view to those who are actual
exposed to it rather than those especially prepared for the experienc

A great deal of evidence supports the notion that the prin
motivating force behind artistic creation is the urge for self-expressi
rather than for communication. This view is nowadays fairly u
popular. It is said that it reflects an obsolete "art-for-art's-sake" at
tude, an "ivory tower" mentality, that it is "esoteric" and "undem
cratic." Art is expected to communicate something of general intere
to convey information that will improve the minds of the recipien

and make them happier through rendering such valuable intelligence to them. Contemporary art is generally blamed for lacking such humanitarian assets, either because the artists have "nothing to say," or because they fail to transmit intelligibly what they have to say because they use abstruse and outlandish vocabularies.

The discussion of the Berlioz example has shown that music may be appreciated on two different planes, separately or simultaneously. It is possible to enjoy Berlioz' composition as a phenomenon of self-expression, by contemplating the interesting and remarkable operations which he performed within the sound material, following an urge of his creative mind. This does not mean that the satisfaction derived from such contemplation is limited to ascertaining statistically the quasi-geometrical form of the work, like counting measures, or observing that a certain phrase occurs more often than another, or the like. It involves sympathetic participation in the expressive context of the musical process, that is, for instance, being able to experience a musical climax as an exciting event *per se,* without thinking that it has certain features in common with a gathering thunderstorm and getting excited about it because of that coincidence.

However, it is also possible to follow up the various suggestions emanating from the associative functions of the musical elements which the composer used, either freely, as my students did, or according to the instructions of the composer.

Whether or not the contemplative appreciation of music as self-expression requires special disposition or training is a matter of opinion. At any rate it requires a mind inclined toward contemplation. Undoubtedly the minds of the great majority of present-day listeners are not so inclined. In an age in which overwhelming importance is attached to physical reality and materialistic values, information through statistical evidence is sought after rather than total experience through sympathy. While motoring through the magnificent scenery of the Teton mountains in Wyoming, I noticed that parking places along the highway were not called "viewpoints," or something on that order, but "picture turn-outs." The average tourist is not any longer expected to look at the mountain himself; but to get his camera to do the looking for him. He does not really see the mountain, but watches the performance of the "seeing machine" in order to survey later the records produced by the mechanism. He does not experience the mountain as a whole with his own entire personality, but he collects, with the aid of mechanical

devices, data regarding the looks of the mountain. The features of contemporary music are just as much or as little evocative of extra-musical concepts as those of any kind of music, and it is possible to follow up the suggestions thus generated to any desired extent. As an example, I should like to submit a passage from my memoirs, on which I have been working off and on during the last eight years. (This work will probably be turned over to some public institution for safekeeping, until such time as its publication would appear to harm no one.) It refers to my experience listening to my *Second Symphony* when it was performed by the Minneapolis Orchestra under the direction of Dmitri Mitropoulos in 1943, twenty years after I had written the work:

. . I find the Second Symphony not particularly cheerful, but rather grim most of the time. I do, however, find it highly intense, and I venture to say that I succeeded in few compositions of mine in maintaining so high a degree of tension for so long a time, for the piece is probably the longest I have written, with the exception of operas, in which, however, many more resources are brought into action than in a purely orchestral work.

. . . Analyzing the impression which I have gathered so far from objectively listening to the work, I feel that the first two movements evoke very much the picture of a giant moving about in a cage, or cave. The first movement is full of terrific efforts to break the walls of the cave, or the bars of the cage, defiant pounding and stomping seem to be the dominant expressive qualities of the music, sorrowful resignation being the only lyrical detail coming to the fore. At one place the narrow intervals that open the movement in the pianissimo of Celesta and Violins, indicating a sort of hazy, misty atmosphere, are repeated in fortissimo by strings and brasses: it sounded to me like the cries of the poor souls in purgatory. The second movement sounds like the result of such a resignation: indulgence in the narrowness to which the giant is confined, a sort of desperate dance, making a virtue out of the deficiency, madly hopping around in the cage, or cave. Again, as in the first movement, some melancholy lyricisms are heard, like a faint reflex of the joys of the free world lying outside of the prison. The third, slow, movement is quite different, based as it is on strongly expressive patterns of great expansiveness. Yet, it does not sound like freedom conquered, as perhaps in the finale of Beethoven's *Fifth*. It rather sounds like the passionate prayer for freedom uttered by someone who has finally broken down the inhibitions that prevented him thus far even to burst out in such a prayer. And it definitely sounds as if he knew that the object of his prayer is well-nigh unattainable. The terrific climax at the end with its combination of thematic materials has, as I feel it now, more uplifting than crushing quality, but it does not act as solution of the conflict, it rather sounds like a delirious attempt to accept the contradictions as ordained by a supreme power and to integrate the conflicting elements into a sort of cosmic pandemonium.

Is this analysis of expressive qualities indicative of the fact that the love experience I was entering into when writing this piece was eventually to become an unhappy one? And is this analysis *ex post facto* conditioned by my knowledge of

how this experience turned out? Has the fact that twenty years have elapsed since it happened anything to do with my present reaction? And how is this reaction affected by my present emotional condition, of which I am not telling anything now, according to the character of this paper which is not a diary but a story of past events, so that present affairs shall not be discussed before they have become parts of the past?

From a purely musical vantage point it could be maintained that the expressive quality of painful tension throughout the symphony, and especially in the last movement, is due to stylistic dualism in that the atonal landscape in which the piece is set is littered with erratic remnants of the tonal idiom. The impression emanating from those isolated elements is frequently quite pathetic, creating a melancholy sentiment of nostalgia such as one would experience in viewing ruins suggesting a happier past amidst powerful but austere and forbidding modern constructions. I am quite sure that I had not at all premeditated such effects, unaware as I was of the duality of the idiom. The philosophical interpretation of the contents of the composition with respect to bondage and freedom could very well be attached to the above stylistic analysis. However, on what side should freedom be supposed to lie? It will depend on the perspective of the observer whether he would see the 'old liberties,' represented by the tonal remnants, engulfed by the rigidity of the new atonal principles, or rather identify ultimate freedom with the complete victory of atonality and assume that the twilight of the present piece was due to the last shackles of tradition not having been yet removed entirely. The choice between the two interpretations will be conditioned by the observer's theory as to which way music is going, and perhaps by his wishes as to which way it ought to go. If he narrows the scope of his analysis to my own individual case, he will have to consider the way my music actually has taken, and that will make the issue no less confusing.

Another horizon still might be chosen as frame of reference, the political and social one. The symbols of imprisonment and longing for freedom could easily be interpreted as expressive of the mentality of the German people after the treaty of Versailles, or if the observer would care to take into account the little detail that I was not a German after all, he might find more satisfactory parallels in the struggle of the underprivileged masses for freedom, or choose any other example of oppression and fight for liberation, at his pleasure. And those who dislike my composition outright are apt to take it for a typical product of chaotic, sterile, and generally unhealthy post-war conditions of life.

What does all this amount to? It would be quite easy to conclude from the possibility of so divergent and even contradictory interpretations that music has no meaning whatever, and that the only safe way of dealing with it is analysis in purely technical terms descriptive of the musical process, and nothing else.

The answer is fairly clear: if the composer has treated his material in a manner that can be demonstrated as technically original, new, unconventional, bold in some respect, the sensitive listener will spontaneously experience these qualities and will, according to his interests, associate the meanings of the music with such concepts as to him seem to correspond to those characteristics. What specific circumstances of reality he chooses to employ as a frame of reference

are entirely his own affair. The significance of contemporary music depends on the ability of the composers to write music that the expert can in technical terms demonstrate to be new, on the ability of the listener to experience its newness through sympathetic observation of the expressive context, and possibly, though not necessarily, on the listener's inclination to visualize great and important ideas as being related to the expressive features of the particular musical process.

TWO POEMS

Catherine Davis

INDOLENCE

I drowse, but hear the sibilance
Of oaks. Indolent August days
        Suggest my ways,
And everything I do, I do by chance.

Today I wandered in a grove
Where all sound was indefinite,
        For nothing fit
But revery and oracles of Jove.

I do not think Dodona spoke
Less vaguely than the nameless wood
        In which I stood
And heard the wind disturb the drowsy oak.

The future, concentrated now
In every act, these days forebode:
        A winding road,
And random winds, a casual, shaken bough.

PATIENCE

When I was young, I mastered all;
I put down fear and slew remorse
Thinking by this to bend my course
To my own will and stay my fall.

The seasons' burden, one by one,
Encumbered me, until the air
Was heavy with my own despair:
I knew that autumn had begun.

Leaves drifted in the air's delay;
And quickened, though the days were slow,
The blackbirds went. I watched them go
And wondered at so short a stay.

Their resignation knew no mood
Of mortal sadness for the year;
Their movement was but more secure
For suffering vicissitude.

Yet we must will our ways, and lend
Patience impatient strength to bear
The seasons of the brutal air,
Although they fail us in the end.